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JESUS' WAY OF LIVING

JESUS' WAY OF LIVING

By

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AN OUTLINE BIBLE-STUDY COURSE



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Any person who has conscientiously followed the instructions of this course, may send answers to the questions following each study, thus applying for a certificate for the course. A fee of fifty cents is required.

FOREWORD

Thoughtful people, the world over, both Christian and non-Christian are discussing Jesus and his way of living. Some from curiosity, but many with a vital interest and desire, are thinking of experiments in his way of life as a solution of modern social, religious, and political problems. *But what was Jesus' Way of living?* Born a Jew, two thousand years ago, his people politically lost, enmeshed in a scheme of ethics and religion which was to the highest degree legalized, ritualized, and standardized, Jesus spoke to individuals and groups living under the conditions of his own day, meeting their own current religious and social problems, and holding their prevalent social and ethical ideals. At least to some extent the strength of his words lay in the fact that they were *appropriate to the conditions*.

It seems clear that it would be unfair to take the words of Jesus and apply them literally, dogmatically, and insistently to a civilization so remote from his day, and so complicated as our own. But what were the central principles of the religion of Jesus, which enabled him so appropriately to preach a new gospel to the people of his world? If these principles were fundamental they should be applicable today, or in any age, no matter how complicated life had become. If Jesus were living in the twentieth century and had to apply his own religious principles to life in the United States, or in Europe, or in any given geographical, social, political, or religious situation, just what would he say and do? How can we as citizens of the present world practice Jesus' Way of Living as he certainly meant his followers to do? That is our question.

This course attempts to find out just as nearly as possible what principles Jesus himself followed, and then by a study of succeeding generations of his followers, what others have thought that he meant by his words, each group being influenced by the particular political, religious, and social environment of the centuries to which it belonged. Thus seeing the mistakes and failures, as well as the spiritual progress of people who have attempted to discover and to apply the teaching of Jesus, we may gain a clearer conception of the difference between the following out of principles, and the literal application of words. Perhaps we shall find that the latter method has not infrequently resulted in spiritual failure, while the former has in the end brought permanent gains to Christianity. Believing that thousands desire such an intelligent understanding of Jesus' Way of Living as will enable us to make a constructive and practical Christian program for our own lives, and for the future of the world, this course has been prepared in the hope that it may help all those who undertake to use it. If further reading is desired, the following books are recommended: Burton, *The Teaching of Jesus and His Contemporaries*; Mathews, *The Social Teaching of Jesus*; Clarke, *The Ideal of Jesus*; Cadoux, *The Guidance of Jesus for Today*; Scott, *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*; Gilkey, *Jesus and Our Generation*; Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*.

STUDY I

INTRODUCTION

By GERALD BIRNEY SMITH

MODERN RELIGIOUS UNREST

There is today a wide-spread dissatisfaction with the kind of Christianity prevalent in our churches. The Great War shocked us out of our complacency. If so-called Christian nations could devote their supreme efforts toward wholesale slaughter, the influence of Christianity on human behavior seemed almost negligible. Men look back to the centuries when the church largely controlled thought and behavior, and contrast those days with our own—often to the discredit of modern Christianity. The controversy between Modernists and Fundamentalists is one aspect of the prevalent mood of dissatisfaction. Something seems to be wrong with our religion. How is that wrong to be righted? Just what are the “essentials” of Christianity?

Questions for Consideration.—How do you feel about the Christianity in your town or city? Do people take it seriously? Is it a strong, definite influence; or is the church tolerantly regarded as a good institution, but not one from which much is to be expected? Do you feel the need of a more definite, vigorous religion? Would you know how to set to work to make Christianity more effective?

CAN WE FIND A CHRISTIAN TEST OF CHRISTIANITY?

The perplexity and confusion in our religious thinking is due largely to the fact that we do not know just how to determine what really belongs to Christianity. High-Churchmen believe that neglect of the sacraments and of formal worship is responsible for our ills. At the opposite pole are those who feel that sacramentalism has fostered superstition rather than Christian living. Fundamentalists are convinced that doctrinal laxity has encouraged moral laxity. On the other hand there are thousands of laymen who are hotly impatient with theological disputes of any kind. Amid the confusion of differing voices, how can we find our way?

This course of study undertakes to map out a way of testing Christianity by a genuinely Christian test. It will attempt to discuss Christianity in terms of life rather than in terms of doctrine or ritual or ecclesiastical polity. Doctrines can be superficially or even hypocritically professed. Rituals may be perfunctorily administered and carelessly observed. Church organization may become a bone of contention. None of these in itself constitutes a valid test of Christianity. The fundamental thing about the Christian religion is the kind of life which grows out of faith in Jesus. To study Christianity as Jesus' way of living means to concern ourselves with a truly Christian test.

Questions for Consideration.—What questions would you ask a person in order to determine whether he is really a Christian? What does your church insist upon as prerequisites for membership? Do these prerequisites seem to you to make for a Christlike way of living? Does doctrinal orthodoxy inevitably produce Christlike living? It is sometimes said that the Apostles' Creed contains all the essentials of Christianity. Would the creed furnish an adequate Christian test?

THE HISTORICAL ACCRETIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

One fruitful source of perplexity in judging Christianity is the failure to realize that our religion has had a long and complicated history. It is often assumed that Christianity is a system which has remained precisely the same from the first. All divergences from the supposed original form are believed to be evidences of disloyalty. It is asserted that a modern church ought to reproduce exactly the organization of the primitive church. Modern Christians are called on to repeat the "faith once delivered to the saints."

This conception of Christianity makes no place for the facts of historical development. Even a slight acquaintance with church history makes one aware that many changes in belief and in practice have taken place during the centuries. If Christianity is believed to be an unchanging system, these undeniable changes constitute a source of perplexity. The advocate of a static religion is led to do one of two things. He will either try to read back into the New Testament those beliefs and practices which he values just because they belong in modern religious life; or he will try to "purify" religion by insisting that modern men shall give up everything not plainly sanctioned by the New Testament. The one attempt does violence to the New Testament, the other does violence to precious historical associations.

The point of view taken in this course of study enables us to avoid the difficulties occasioned by regarding Christianity as an unchanging system. We are concerned with a way of living rather than with an institution or a creed. The genius of Christianity consists in its power to infuse Christlike devotion into various types of culture. One of the glorious aspects of our religion is that it can permit Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, ancient men and modern men to carry over into their Christianity all aspects of cult or culture which are compatible with the Christian way of living. We can thus give positive valuation to the historical accretions of Christianity, and can avoid the dogmatic disputations which are inevitable when men conceive Christianity to be a rigid authoritative system.

Questions for Consideration.—Why does an Episcopalian believe that Christian ministers ought to be ordained by a bishop who stands in the apostolic succession? Why does a Baptist believe that Christians should be baptised by immersion? Why do so many people think that a Christian today should affirm the Apostles' Creed? These are some of the questions which stand in the way of Christian unity. Compare the church as you know it today with the church of your grandfather's day. What changes can you note? Why have these changes come

about? How would you proceed to determine whether your grandfather's Christianity or your own is more worthy? How should the historical accretions of Christianity be judged?

Our observance of Christmas is a good illustration of the way in which historical accretion has come to be a vital and precious aspect of Christianity. There is no mention of Christmas celebration in the New Testament. Some of the Puritans in New England objected to Christmas because it was originally a pagan festival. What judgment would you pass on Christmas if you were to inquire whether it is authorized in the New Testament? What would be your judgment if you were to ask whether it promotes a Christlike way of living? What attitude do you think Jesus would take toward modern Christmas celebration?

THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED

One of the most important contributions of modern biblical scholarship is its recovery for us of the living personages of the Bible. Until quite recently the Bible has been used primarily as if it were a compendium of proof-texts. But today we are learning to look behind the words and to become acquainted with the men who uttered them.

As a result of this, we are beginning to realize that the vitality of the biblical utterances lies in the fact that they were addressed to living people, and were designed to help these people to meet their religious difficulties. We must read the biblical messages in relation to the people to whom they were addressed, rather than primarily in relation to our own problems.

In order to understand Jesus, we must picture the world in which he lived, the people to whom he talked, the religious habits current in his day, the problems faced by those among whom he moved. It is only as we shall reproduce in imagination the actual world in which Jesus lived that we shall be in a position to appreciate the significance of his deeds and his words.

That world was very different from ours. It was a world without railroads or automobiles or newspapers or printed books. Jesus' ministry was located for the most part, in a very simple world of peasants and fishermen and petty traders. It was to people whose thoughts and ideals were conditioned by this world that he addressed himself. He was trying to help them to find God in terms of their domestic, economic, and religious relations. It goes without saying that the content of what he said is inevitably conditioned by the circumstances under which he lived and worked. In our complicated modern life we need to have many questions discussed which did not exist in Jesus' day. If we were to attempt to find in the teachings of Jesus a complete guide for modern life, we should be embarrassed in two ways. On the one hand, we should find him discussing questions like those of Jewish ritual, which no longer concern us. On the other hand he would be silent on some important modern questions (such as the League of Nations, for instance) just because these questions did not exist in his world.

We shall have occasion in a later study to see the difficulties which arise when

men try to put into practice the words of Jesus without reference to the world into which those words fitted. Attention is here directed to the fact that when we are considering a way of living rather than technical commands, we escape the embarrassment due to the discovery that some of Jesus' utterances belong to a thought-world which no longer exists. A way of living in that ancient world may be a challenge and an inspiration to modern men, not to mimic the deeds of long ago, but to discover the kind of deeds demanded in our day by that way of living.

Questions for Consideration.—Do you usually think of Jesus as talking to actual people before him? Or do you think of him as uttering great truths intended for all ages? Reread the gospels with an eye for the concrete situation in every case. Does this way of reading them make Jesus' teaching more or less impressive? Name some questions which Jesus discussed, which are not problems in your life. Are there some questions on which you need guidance but on which Jesus said nothing? How would the conception of Christianity as Jesus' way of living help you in such a case?

THE RELIGION OF JESUS

It is natural and right that we should think of Jesus as one who is able to give to us the direction which we need in religious living. His teachings will always be an inexhaustible source of inspiration and illumination. But it should never be forgotten that Jesus had a religious experience of his own. His teachings were not mere abstract principles. They were testimonies growing out of his own experience.

When we consider Christianity as Jesus' way of living we come to be greatly interested in the inner life of Jesus. That way of living is the expression of a personal experience of spiritual realities. To attempt to follow Jesus' precepts without sharing the religious experience out of which those precepts grow would be like attempting to play a musical composition without any prior appreciation of the significance of music.

The second study in this course is entitled "How Jesus Followed His Way." It will undertake to introduce us to Jesus' own aspirations and achievements. To be a Christian means to share the life of Jesus. His teachings are, of course, incomparably great. But greater still is his power to initiate those who trust him into the kind of life which gladly turns to his teachings for guidance.

The appreciation of the religion of Jesus is a comparatively recent achievement of Christian scholarship. The theologically defined Christ has been the theme of most scholars since the early days when there was bitter controversy over the proper definition of the nature of Christ. Today we see a rapidly diminishing interest in those ancient controversies. The new interest in the personal religion of Jesus leads us into a more vital relation to him. This new interest is finding expression in an ardent desire to make modern Christianity worthy of Jesus' own religion, instead of being content with formal theological tests.

Questions for Consideration. There are two ways of securing results. One way is represented by military discipline. Commands are to be obeyed without

questioning. The other way is represented by education. The teacher helps the student to know the facts so that the student can form his own convictions. In military discipline the officers are superiors rather than companions. In education teacher and students are companions in a common quest for truth. The private is not expected to share the inner life of the officer. The student is expected to share the life of the teacher.

Has the Christian life sometimes been interpreted after the military analogy? The Duke of Wellington is said to have referred to the precepts of Jesus as "marching orders." Does Jesus seem to you to have been the kind of person to "give orders"? Did he want his disciples to share his inner life? Have we been eager enough to know about Jesus' own religious experience? If we think of Christianity as Jesus' way of living, can we be Christians unless we share Jesus' religious experience? Does such a conception seem to you to be more or less religiously profound than the conception of "salvation" which theologians have expounded?

THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF JESUS

Only the early disciples had the privilege of knowing Jesus directly. All Christians since that time have been dependent on the testimony of those early disciples. But the testimony of others never leaves so definite an impression as a person's own words and deeds. When we listen to a description, we must use our own imagination in order to make the person described vividly real. Pious imagination has had a large part in the interpretations of Jesus which have become current in the Christian church.

Such imagination was until recently exercised under the sway of the conviction that Christianity is an unchanging thing. It was assumed by every theologian that the Christianity which he held to be true must be the Christianity which Jesus authorized. The theologian's imagination, therefore, constructed a picture of Jesus which fitted into the system held by the theologian. Christ in theology has been depicted as Logos, as Priest, as Sacrificial Victim, as Ecclesiastical Primate, as Law-giver, as Religious Philosopher—to mention only a few of the ideals which have entered into Christology.

It is evidence of the spiritual power of Jesus that all of these theological conceptions were inevitably softened and humanized to a certain extent by being associated with his name. It is significant, however, that these theologies found very little confirmation in the story of Jesus' life. Paul's theological arguments or proof-texts adapted from the Old Testament furnished the principal arguments. One of the most difficult tasks of the modern Christian is to emancipate himself from the theological tradition in order to learn to know Jesus himself.

In this connection, attention may be called again to the help furnished by thinking of Christianity as Jesus' way of living. It relieves us of the feeling that we ought to prove that our theological ideas were taught by Jesus. The ideas of the fourth century were, of course, different from those of the first century, as the ideas of the twentieth century differ from those of former centuries. The all-important

thing is not to discover whether ideas are identical, but to discover whether the way in which we use our ideas is compatible with the spirit which inspired Jesus. Doctrines concerning Christ have held so important a place in interpretations of Christianity that men are likely to be confused in their attempt to be at the same time loyal to Christian ideals and loyal to the demands of present-day living and thinking. Not a doctrine about Jesus, but Jesus' way of living is the central item in Christian loyalty. If this is once clearly understood, we can appreciate the theology of a former time without feeling compelled to continue to affirm it when it no longer interprets the religious ideals of the present.

Questions for Consideration.—Have you ever tried on the basis of a description to imagine how a person looks and behaves? When you meet the person himself, you discover how misleading imagination may be. Everyone should read Weinell's *Jesus in the Nineteenth Century*, which gives a very interesting account of recent attempts to portray Jesus. The large part played by imagination is clearly evident from this comparative survey.

We are just beginning to interpret the history of doctrine in relation to the interests of the time in which the doctrine arose. Such an interpretation makes it possible to understand why theological imagination took the direction which it did. In a time or a locality where salvation is thought of as dependent on priests and sacraments, could Jesus have a vital place in religion unless he was pictured as authorizing a priestly and sacramental system? In the ancient Hellenic world where knowledge was prized above all else, could Jesus have primary significance unless he was regarded as the revealer of divine wisdom? We often refer to the "rediscovery" of Jesus in our day as the great interpreter of social reform. How much of this is due to the fact that social questions are peculiarly important today? Does it seem to you that we are getting closer to the real spirit of Jesus if we try to discover his way of living than we are if we try to discover his metaphysical or theological "nature"?

HOW THE EARLY CHRISTIANS TRIED TO LIVE

In the New Testament we have the story of the early attempts to establish Christian standards of living. The third study in this course will take up this subject. Attention may here be called to one aspect of early Christian living which is often overlooked.

We are so accustomed to living in a world which is nominally "Christian" that it is difficult for us really to appreciate the situation in which the early Christians found themselves. They were suspected and often persecuted. They could not look to this world for approval. They appealed to the standards of an unseen world, which Jesus would establish when he returned in glory. They sought the experience of being possessed by the spirit, since this was evidence to them that Christ from his throne in heaven was manifesting his favor by sending the spirit.

This way of testing Christian living made for magnificent courage. The disapproval of men could be disregarded if only the Christian could be sure of Christ's approval. But it also involved the danger of visionary and impractical ideals. The

appeal to the judgment of an invisible Christ left room for a considerable exercise of imagination, when men attempted to declare just what Christ's judgment was. So long as the memory of Jesus' earthly life was vivid, his way of living would exercise a strong influence. But later generations were not under the spell of that life, and ecclesiastical and sacramental tests of Christianity came to the front.

It is very important for us to understand the precise circumstances under which the early Christians lived, in order to see how the Christian way of living is adapted to those circumstances. Properly understood, the ideals of the early Christians challenge us to worthy living. If not historically interpreted, these ideals may be difficult to adjust to the conditions which modern men must face.

Questions for Consideration.—Have you ever been puzzled and baffled when you tried to picture yourself doing some of the things which the early Christians did? How do we judge "speaking with tongues" today? Are those sects which practice this gift more Christlike than those churches which do not practice it? Would the thoughts and behavior of a persecuted group be different from those of a group which enjoyed public approval? Indicate some of the differences between the world in which the early disciples lived and the world in which you live. Would these differences require your behavior to be different from that of the early Christians?

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMAL TESTS

After two or three generations, the memory of Jesus' personal life had vanished, save as it was preserved in writings about Jesus. This was a great loss. One Christian writer about the middle of the second century tells us that when possible he preferred to talk with someone whose memory stretched back to the early days, rather than to resort to written records. As time went on, however, writings came to assume more and more importance. Eventually those books which constitute the New Testament were set off by themselves and were regarded as compendiums of Christian doctrine, rather than as testimonies of disciples who were talking about a way of living. It is only within the past century that New Testament scholars have seriously tried to get back of the writings themselves to the religious life that produced the writings.

Within a century after the death of Jesus, many diverse interpretations of Christianity had arisen. It was felt to be supremely important to determine what interpretation really represented Christ's own intention. It was assumed that Jesus must have established some definite form of church organization, and must have decreed what doctrines should be taught and what sacraments should be observed. The Catholic Church holds that Jesus committed to the apostles knowledge of what constitutes true Christianity, and endowed the apostles and their duly appointed successors with authority to declare what true Christianity is.

Under this conception, to be a Christian means to conform to the requirements laid down by the authoritative church. Ecclesiastical regulations come to take first place. To be baptised in the proper way, to learn and profess correct doctrine, to be faithful in attendance on church services—these are tests which have been very

prominent. It is, of course, true that Christlike living is constantly emphasized, and that every effort is made to interpret ecclesiastical regulations so as to reinforce such living. But so essential are ecclesiastical regulations felt to be that grave doubts are expressed to as whether mere Christlike living would meet with Jesus' approval without baptism and the holding of an authorized creed.

The great religious revivals in the history of Christianity have usually been attempts to give to Christian living a more primary place. But the hold of formal tests has remained unbroken in Catholicism and to a large extent in Protestantism. Many in all Protestant bodies view with alarm the decreasing hold of such tests in modern life, and seek to reinstate them. There is, indeed, a real danger that the discrediting of these tests shall not be accompanied by any constructive working out of better tests, and that "liberalism" may be easy-going and negative in its attitude. Nothing is more important than such a study as this course contemplates, in order that Christians who have lost reverence for formal tests may have the positive challenge and inspiration which comes from attempting seriously to adopt Jesus' way of living.

Questions for consideration.—Principal Jacks has said that Christianity is a "smothered religion"—smothered by formal theology and ecclesiastical regulations. If we go back to Jesus' way of living, what do we find him emphasizing? How much attention did Jesus give to baptism? Compare the space given to this in his teachings with the space given to other matters. Could the Nicene Creed be formulated out of Jesus' own words? What kind of a creed would result if you were to assemble the utterances of the Sermon on the Mount? Just what relation is there between the affirmations of the Apostles' Creed and the problems of Christlike living. What formal tests of your Christianity have you confronted? How do you feel toward them? What tests do Fundamentalists desire? Why do liberals object to these tests? What tests do liberals propose? What seems to you to be the significance of the growing interest in Jesus' way of living?

THE MODERN APPEAL TO JESUS

Growing dissatisfaction with formal tests of Christianity has been accompanied by an earnest attempt in recent years to discover the kind of test which Jesus would apply. Some thirty years ago Dr. Charles M. Sheldon published a book entitled *In His Steps*. Dr. Sheldon proposed to test modern Christianity by asking what Jesus would do if he were to undertake the duties of a merchant, a teacher, a journalist, or a politician today. The eager reading which the book received indicated a significant longing on the part of modern Christians for a more direct and vital relationship between religious profession and genuine discipleship to Jesus. During the past quarter of a century scholars have been rediscovering for us the traits of the "Man of Nazareth" whose personality attracted and held the first disciples.¹ To an increasing extent textbooks on Christian ethics have been con-

¹ Among the notable contributions may be mentioned F. G. Peabody's *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character* and *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*; and W. N. Clark's *The Ideal of Jesus*.

cerned with an intensive study of Jesus' teachings. In colleges where courses on religion are given, the life of Jesus, and the teachings of Jesus receive primary attention. Several organizations exist today expressly committed to the attempt to instruct people concerning the nature of Jesus' moral and religious ideals and to persuade professing Christians to take Jesus more seriously. We seem to be on the threshold of a revival of religion which seeks to reinstate the personal power of Jesus in the center of Christianity.

The emotional power of such an appeal is very great. It is supremely important that this emotional urge shall be guided by real knowledge about Jesus, and about the conditions which must be met when one tries to be a worthy disciple. It is very easy to select a few proof-texts from the sayings of Jesus and to make these seem to authorize some pet theory of life. It is a more difficult undertaking than is often realized to obtain a truthful all-round picture of Jesus' way of living.

The work done on the course of study to which this chapter is an introduction will be amply rewarding for those who wish to combine loyalty to Jesus with discriminating knowledge of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

Questions for consideration.—How would you discover what Jesus would do if he were living in your town? How would he dress? Would that dress be the same kind which he wore in Palestine? If not, why not? Would he insist that the rituals practiced by him in the first century should be maintained in the twentieth century? If so, why? If not, why not? Would the careful study of Jesus' teaching enable a Christian to know how to vote in an election? What else would be necessary? Is there a difference between mastering the teachings of Jesus and apprehending his way of living?

STUDY II

JESUS' CONCEPTION OF HIS "WAY"

By SHAILER MATHEWS

From the questions raised in our first study we have been made to realize that to understand Jesus we must not detach him from his times and his people, for he, like all of us, faced real situations and lived a real life among real people.

The religious life of the Jews was centered upon the preparation for the new era God was to establish. The Temple service was magnificent in its ceremonial. The pious scribes and interpreters existed to set forth the law of God so that his will could actually be done. The aim was not so much individual piety as the establishment of a national obedience to Jehovah. Jewish scholars and religious teachers held that the coming triumph of God, through his chosen people, would be conditioned by the extent to which the nation kept his law. They naturally were concerned to teach the populace to observe the minute application of the Mosaic laws, and synagogues were established in cities and towns as centers of such education.

Palestine in the time of Jesus was not strictly Jewish. The exact proportion of Jewish inhabitants we do not know, but from what information we have it would appear that while most of the population was Jewish, in Samaria, southern Galilee, and east of the Jordan the Greek population was large. Many cities in the Maritime plain had mixed population. Apparently commerce was largely in the hands of the Greeks. The Jews were the farmers, artisans, fishermen, and retail traders in small towns.

Galilee, where Jesus grew up, was comparatively a new country so far as Jewish population was concerned. The Galileans were loyal to their religion, and they had the restless patriotism of the citizens of a new country and were always ready for a revolt. While Judea was administered directly by Roman officials, Galilee and Perea, as well as the region north and east of the sea of Galilee, was under the control of native leaders called tetrarchs. These rulers were members of the Herodian family, and were neither good Jews nor popular favorites. Distrust and dislike of them increased the restlessness of the masses.

Palestine was not a remote country, but in the very midst of the life of the ancient world. The fate of Rome had been repeatedly in this vicinity, and it lay on the natural trade route between the Mesopotamian country, the Mediterranean Sea, and Egypt. It was natural, therefore, that Rome with its insistence upon peace and order should have crushed in the beginning any political agitation in such a

strategic region. It was in this restless world that Jesus lived. Jesus' conception of his "Way of Life" was called forth by actual circumstances rather than by speculations.

I. JESUS AND THE POLITICAL PROBLEM OF HIS PEOPLE

Jesus lived in a day when the nation was fomenting revolution. For years they had been expecting a God-appointed leader, under whom they would drive out the Romans and establish themselves as the masters of the world. The Messianic hope was a combination of religion and revolution. The central thought of this expectation was the establishment, by God, of his reign through the Jewish people. The term "Kingdom of God" contained a great ideal of a new imperialism, in which the leader, established by God, should share his authority with those closely associated with him. Matt., ch. 3, pictures John the Baptist announcing the coming of the kingdom and demanding that to share in it men must put away their hypocrisy and greed and wholeheartedly repent of their sins. He is quite clearly, however, thinking of the old Jewish conception of a political kingdom which he believes to be the meaning of all the ancient prophecies. The immediate interest of his countrymen in John the Baptist was therefore not exclusively religious. There was in it a passionate patriotism, which a few years later was to project the nation into civil war.

Jesus himself joined the movement which John inaugurated, and a little later heralded the same message of the coming of the Kingdom of God. That the disciples of Jesus shared in the political hopes of the nation is seen in their conversations before and after his death. Read Luke 24:13-21; Mark 9:33, 34; 10:35-45. But Jesus never became a revolutionist, and he opposed all appeal to force. He sympathized with the nation to be but he interpreted the purpose of God in terms of a new religious social order. This hope of the kingdom made the nucleus of his teaching as to the "Way." Men were to become worthy of citizenship in the kingdom. The political analogy did not, however, suffice. The relation of God to the kingdom was that of a father to his children rather than of a ruler to his subjects.

II. THE INDIVIDUALITY OF JESUS

1. Jesus, though inheriting the point of view, as well as the civilization of his people, was more than a mere product of his time. He possessed unique individuality, which was constantly enriched by his relation with men and God. His individuality appears at the very beginning of our knowledge of him, when as a child, he went with his parents to the Passover at Jerusalem. Read Luke 2:41-50. During the years that intervened between these events and his first public appearance, we know nothing of him beyond that he developed normally.

2. Immediately upon his public appearance we see that his interpretation of the fatherliness of God had resulted in a sense of the responsibility of sonship

which distinguished him from all his people. He turned from the conventional life to one of sacrificial service to his fellows. Turning his back on a popularity based on conformity, he at once included all regions of the country and all classes of society in his ministry. Read Mark 1:35-39; Luke 5:27-32. His mother and other members of his family at one time misunderstood his intensity for evidence of an unbalanced mind, Mark 3:20, 21, but it is plain enough that their apprehensions were absurd. He was immensely active, but he was the farthest possible from fanaticism. One sees also how his strong individuality appears in his break with the Pharisees at points where they were regarded as peculiarly loyal to the will of God. Mark, ch. 2, represents him as pronouncing moral delinquency worse than physical illness and presuming to forgive sins; as calling to companionship a despised Jewish taxgatherer; as eating with social groups outside the pale of Phariseism; as relegating fasting to others than his followers; as using the Sabbath for the benefit of man in ways not sanctioned by the pious of his day. But each time his action involved a gracious act of appreciation and sympathy for which there was no room in the religious legalism of his times. Repeated illustrations of this strong but gracious characteristic are to be seen in his dealings with those sinners and publicans whom the conventional religious people of his day despised. He dined with them and he let them anoint him with perfume. Read Luke 7:36-50.

[Read that long Psalm, number 119, and catch the spirit of the times in the endlessly repeated expressions of adoration for *the law* and promises of obedience to it. It was by such obedience that the pious Jew expected to earn a place in the Kingdom of God of which Jerusalem was to be the center. It was upon such inherited promises as that of Isaiah 2:2-4 that he built his hopes. Could there be a stronger contrast to this than the freedom of Jesus' attitudes?]

3. Jesus' strong individuality appears in the impression he made upon his friends and enemies, Mark 1:16-20. This right of individual judgment he enjoins upon his disciples, Matt. 23:8-12. It is to be borne in mind that Jesus had to win his way into the positions which he eventually gained in the hearts of men. The disciples apparently knew nothing of any peculiarity of birth. He came to them without any other advantages than those powers which lay in his own person. From the start they accepted him as one who could make them "fishers of men."

III. THE NORMALITY OF JESUS' LIFE

Read Matt. 13:54-58. Note the difference between Jesus and John, Matt. 3:1-4, and the words of Jesus in Luke 7:31-35. Many religious leaders have been abnormal in their relationship to the common things of life, and have broken with the conventionalities of their times. On the other hand, Jesus seems never to have neglected the better customs of his day. Until the beginning of his public work he lived the life of an artisan. His fellow-citizens in Nazareth apparently saw nothing peculiar in his words or life, for when men began to accept him as a public character,

his neighbors could see no reason for his prominence. After the beginning of his public career Jesus did not seem to have adopted any new habit of life. It is true he did not marry, but he never insisted upon celibacy, and at least some of his followers were married.

Jesus had no strange habits as a religious leader. In the case of John the Baptist there was evident asceticism, as well as unconventionality. Jesus, however, maintained a normal life of a gentleman. There is no insistence upon even the milder form of asceticism. He even refused to teach his disciples to fast. This sanity and balance of Jesus was practiced throughout his life.

He was under constant pressure to do something extravagant and the very loyalty of his friends must have suggested extraordinary action, but he never yielded to this temptation. The story of Jesus' early experience in Luke 4:1-13 reflects this struggle. Read also Luke 9:51-56 and Matt. 26:53. At the very last he conducted himself in a way to win the respect of even his executioners.

IV. JESUS' WAY OF LIFE, ONE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE LOVE OF GOD

The fundamental basis of both individuality and normality in Jesus lay in his complete sanity concerning God and his absolute confidence in the love of God. Read again Luke 2:40-51. Follow with Matt. 11:25-30, the one reflecting the simple expression of a boyish heart and the other the calm assurance of manhood. No understanding of Jesus is correct that omits the fatherliness of God. He saw it reflected in the love of parents for their children, and in the processes of nature. He felt it in his own heart. Wherever the will of the Father was discovered in life, it was good will, love. This good will of God gave no opportunity for anxiety concerning the present or the future. Read Matt. 6:19-34. It was this confidence in his Father's love that steadied him in moments of disappointment, when he found that he must rely upon the humble and simple-minded instead of the "wise and prudent." This disconcerting fact was something for which he could give thanks. It was the Father's will. He did not need to understand it; he accepted it as the expression of Divine Life through which comes peace, not the peace of submission, but of occupation. Once he discovered the conditions under which the Father determined he was to work, Jesus could co-operate with them intelligently and effectively. Therefore he could tell others to come unto him and find rest. To see life as under the control of the living God and to co-operate in all circumstances was to bring peace and a joy which would never be gained either by submission or passivity. This realistic courageous basis of living for the purpose of expressing the Father's will characterized the life of Jesus. True, there were moments in which he was not clear just what the Father's will was (see Matt. 26:36-39), but such hesitation was not long or universal.

1. *Jesus' knowledge of God as Father was an inner experience.* Study Luke 2:40-51, and notice how the reply of the boy Jesus must indicate an inner experi-

ence which even Mary did not understand. This deep unity of Jesus with God in his own experiences is clearly taught in the prayer in John, ch. 17. Read also John 10:7-18; 22-39. There is something here that we cannot fathom save as we recall how largely our own religion is a matter of experience and life rather than of formal belief.

2. *Jesus' confidence in the love of God led him to pray to God as Father.* In all the great crises of his life, Jesus is said to have sought strength and help from his Father. Thus at his baptism, Luke 3:21-22, he is in the act of praying when the consciousness of the approval of his Father is deepest. At his transfiguration, Luke 9:28-26, it is while communing with God in prayer that the transfiguring experience comes to him. In his agony in the garden, Luke 22:39-46, it is in prayer that his confidence in the Father's love finds expression, and on the Cross when man had done his worst he commends his spirit to the Father whose love and wisdom he cannot doubt. Read Luke 23:44-46.

3. *Jesus' faith in God carried with it confidence in the plan of God.* Read Matt. 16:21-26. It is this sublime faith in the will of God that took him to the Cross. He knew the Cross as a part of God's will. It is this faith in God which made him willing to meet death at the hands of his enemies, confident that such a death could not defeat and would in some way fulfil the purpose of God.

The will of God was not to be ultimately denied. Some day the reign of love would come, and man would be doing upon earth the will of the Father in heaven.

V. JESUS EXPRESSED IN HIS LIFE THE LOVE WHICH HE FOUND IN GOD

Read Luke 4:16-40, recalling that the passage read was one of the great messianic speeches of the prophet, familiar to all the people as such. The deeds of Jesus were the evidence of his messiahship. Read Matt. 11:2-19 and its fuller parallel, Luke 7:18-35. The evidence which he had for the coming of the spirit upon him was the fact that he was able to serve the poor, the blind, and other needy persons. That was indeed his conception of what it meant to be the Messiah. This was far enough from the revolutionary ideas of his contemporaries, but it showed how he regarded himself as the very embodiment of his "Way."

He went beyond the commandment of Deut. 6:5 and the later injunction of the Levitical law "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" to a sacrificial love that placed the welfare of men above and beyond his own. Just as he could not take action which involved the denial of the law of gravitation, Luke 4:9-12, so he could not conceive a morality contrary to Divine love. It is this that has always grasped the imagination of men and awakened their admiration.

1. *Jesus gave himself to help his followers.* He was not indifferent to the ordinary call of charity, but he did something more than give alms. He gave himself. There streamed from him some power that healed the sick. See Mark 1:21-34; 5:25-43. He gave freely to those who regarded themselves as hopeless. Scan

each of the first three Gospels searching for the stories of Jesus' healing acts and note how frequently they were accompanied by expressions of sympathy, and evidences that he himself shared spiritually in the sorrows which he healed. He brought hope to those who regarded themselves as hopeless. The conditions under which the Kingdom of God might be shared were in the thought of his contemporaries such that it must be restricted to a privileged class. To him there was no privileged class save on the basis of a recognition of the obligation of brotherly love. He gave his message of love to all.

2. *The final issue of his life sprang from his attempt to live a life of love in an environment which was hostile.* He might easily have escaped in the darkness that sad night of his betrayal, for the way was open back to the north and safety. But he could not flee from anything as evil because he had come to see life as the will of the Father so he went about his service to the world fully aware of the end to which it must lead. This way of service was the way of sacrifice.

3. Again re-read the three earlier Gospels and notice how *constant was the activity of Jesus*. Even in his own village he was withheld from his ministry of service only by the contempt of those whom he would have helped. Read Mark 6:1-6. From the very beginning of his public ministry he was untiring. Note Mark 1:32-39. Every hour brought fresh opportunity. He did not need to seek for "cases" for his responsive spirit saw into the hearts of rich and poor alike. He responded to the unspoken need of those whom their fellow-men deemed most fortunate. Read the story of Nicodemus, John 3:1-21, and of Zaccheus, Luke 19:1-10, both men upon whom their fellows looked with envy, but in whom Jesus saw a consciousness of spiritual need which he alone could help.

5. *The "Way" of Jesus required him to break with the past.* There were many deeply religious people among the Jews about Jesus to whom the law and its demands, and the Temple ceremonials, were satisfactory expressions of their religious life. With spiritual vision less acute than that of Jesus they continued to elaborate upon the past when they sought to improve upon the present.

The loyalty of Jesus to his national religion can be seen in Mark 1:40-44 and in Mark 11:15-18, yet notice how he condemned the elaboration of the tradition of Moses by the Pharisees. Read Mark 7:1-23 and Matt. 15:1-20. These passages give a clue to the reason why Jesus aroused the hostility of the Pharisees. He was taking religion out from the sphere of statutes and rites and making it a matter of inner attitudes. The depth of his feeling may be seen in Matt. 23:15-19.

We know so little about the life of Jesus beyond the events of his public ministry that it is unsafe to try to describe it in much detail. It is clear that his sense of duty led him to abandon conditions which he before had enjoyed. He knew the risk of misinterpretation on the part of his friends, Mark 4:33, 34, of misunderstanding and hostility of his neighbors. He had to depend for his living on the generosity of his friends. Foxes had holes, birds of the air had nests, Luke

9:58, but he had no place to lay his head. Ostracized by the leaders of his nation, he dared not trust himself fully to the crowd that followed him. Surrounded by loyal friends he could not trust their wisdom or their interpretations of himself. He lived a life of loneliness. All this he endured without complaint, because he saw that it was involved in the very undertaking to which he had set himself.

If he told his followers that they must lose life in order to find it, Matt. 16:25, he was ready to find life by the same road of sacrifice. If he told his disciples that they must make sacrifices for the Kingdom of God, Mark 10:29, they could see that he had left family and land for the gospel's sake. He expressed to the fullest the tragic fact that men who could help others are frequently hated by those whom they help. But such experiences he accepted as conditions of his life-work, and used them as encouragement and caution for his disciples. If their master was thus abused what could his disciples expect?

VI. JESUS URGED HIS FOLLOWERS TO REPRODUCE THE ATTITUDE OF FAITH AND LOVE WHICH CONSTITUTED HIS WAY

Jesus, like John the Baptist, was constantly called upon to tell people how to live in accordance with the great hope that he was preaching. The general principles of his way of living are given fully in the group of his sayings called the Sermon on the Mount. Read and think over Matt., chs. 5, 6, 7, in the light of what has been said of the times of Jesus. These principles were spiritually revolutionary in the day of Jesus.

But many of the most significant of the sayings of Jesus were evoked by special conditions and persons. Read the story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37, and recall the teaching, simple, yet profound, which Jesus gave upon that occasion, not so much in his words, as by his insight into the spiritual lack in the man to whom he spoke.

One is rapt in admiration of the truth contained in the story of the rich man, Luke 12:16-21, to overlook the grasping man who, standing before Jesus with a fretful complaint about an inheritance, is the recipient of the rebuke and the warning inherent in the story. Note in Luke 18:18-30 that it is to the visit of "a certain ruler," ambitious for eternal life that we owe Jesus' statement in effect, that riches may be a curse as well as a blessing.

Make an interesting experiment by selecting each of the stories which present teaching given by Jesus to individuals and see how many of them show him actually applying the principles which the collection of sayings in the Sermon on the Mount represents.

Jesus himself had to organize his life in the face of opposition and friendship alike. In his example as well as in his words his "Way" is seen.

1. *In his effort to influence the conduct of his followers Jesus never attempts to control the expression of the attitude which he sought to instil by detailed legisla-*

tion. His method of teaching was not that of a lawgiver, but of a friend and leader and a poet also. Notice that very few of his statements can be taken literally, but they are all forcible descriptions of the spirit which Jesus would have men show. The light under the bushel, the right and the left cheek of chapter 5, the lilies clothed in glory, chapter 6, and the mote and the beam, of chapter 7, are all poetic, but so clear in their meaning that none can mistake them.

How different his conception was from that of a law-giver can be seen by a study of his own treatment of the law. Read Matt. 5:17-20. Note particularly his attitude to certain of the ten commandments, Matt. 5:21-26, 27-32, 33-37.

2. *Jesus' "Way of living" involves the spirit of brotherhood.* He constantly emphasizes this no matter with what group he is speaking. Recall Matt. 5:43-48 and its practical application in Luke 10:25-37. In Matt. 25:31-46 the crucial test at the judgment day is represented as, not what the Jews would have expected, a racial test, but a test of brotherly conduct.

3. Read again Matt. 11:25-30. *Notice that the peace and rest that he assures to his followers is a result of their desire to do the will of God.* This had been his experience in his relation to his Father, and he is confident that it will be theirs. It is in this sense that he would set himself forth as the Son of Man, that is to say, the type of those who shall make up the Kingdom of God, the representative of the sort of life which would be in that kingdom. His disciples were urged to act so as to express that same attitude. Read John 13:1-20.

4. *Jesus expected those who followed his "Way" to rely upon God in constant prayer.* The brief prayer which he taught his disciples may be found in Matt. 6:9-13 and in Luke 11:2-4. It is profoundly moral. No one could safely pray such a prayer who has an unforgiving spirit. The prayers of his followers must be in accordance with Jesus' ideals, Matt. 5:44; 6:27-34; John 14:13-17; 16:23-27. That Jesus should make moral limitations to prayer was to be expected. His reverence for God was too great to permit anything approaching magic or immorality in prayer. He would not "tempt God." This is the real implication of prayer in his name. Unless one is sure that what he requests is morally right Jesus gives him no encouragement to pray. The application of this is vital and heart-searching. Can a man pray for success in an immoral undertaking? Or for a business in which injustice is done other men? Or for forgiveness when he is cherishing hatred?

5. *The absolute sincerity of Jesus laid upon his followers a similar obligation to put away all superficiality and insincerity.* Nothing was acceptable which was done for the sake of appearances. Read Matt. 23:28-32; 6:1-8; and ch. 23. The simple unaffected heart of the child represents the spirit which Jesus desired to see in those who followed his way. Matt. 18:1-6.

VI. KNOWLEDGE PROVIDES A BASIS FOR IMAGINATION

This study should have led to the reading and the re-reading of the three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. (The Gospel of John belongs to a later

century and will be taken up in a future study.) Make one more survey of these Gospels trying to visualize Jesus in *all* his daily relationships, his attitude toward health, possessions, family life in general, children, nature, the past, the future, food, drink, clothing, foreigners, the Temple, the Synagogue, the Bible of his day, education, his work. Our imagination must be accurate as well as vivid.

It is only by such realization of Jesus in all of his relationships that we can see how his "Way" brought him spiritual satisfaction, and gave him confidence to expect its ultimate triumph in the world.

CONCLUSION

Jesus' own conception of his "Way" is easy to grasp intellectually. He had no system of philosophy or theology. His interest was that of a sacrificial morality inspired by religious faith in a loving Fatherly God. If men were to follow him they were to be possessed of like convictions. Providing they were true to this conviction they might have any sort of philosophy and theology. Only they must be ready to follow the Way as it led through the strait gate, and the narrow path of service to their fellows and loyalty to their Heavenly Father.

The greatest issue in religion is just here. As will appear in later studies, followers of Jesus have not as a whole centered their attention upon the Way of Jesus, but upon elements of ecclesiastical regularity and organization. True, the sense of loyalty to the master has never been wholly lost. Every now and then men have arisen who have pointed out how subsidiary theology and tradition may become. Our day is before all others aware of this difference between the "Way," and what may be called the guide posts and the guardians of the "Way."

The great call is not so much back to Jesus, as forward with him along his way of truth and life.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe briefly political conditions in the country of Palestine.
2. What prevailing religious ideas were present in the environment of Jesus (*a*) concerning the Mosaic law, (*b*) concerning religious observances?
3. What place had the Temple in the religious life of the community? What the Synagogue?
4. How did Jesus in his own thinking change the current conception of the Kingdom of God?
5. How did Jesus differ from many other religious reformers of ancient times in his normal life?
6. How early in life did his individuality make itself felt?
7. Give some of the characteristics of his response to the sense of the fatherliness of God.
8. Into what seeming social and religious extremes did this lead him?

9. To what extent did confidence in God carry Jesus?
10. What elements in the teaching of Jesus made a break with the past religious customs of his people inevitable?
11. What was the method of the insistence of Jesus that his "Way" should be taken by his followers?
12. Analyze the "Way" as it must be worked out by them.
13. Describe Jesus' attitude toward and teaching about prayer.
14. Name some of the occasions when the sincerity of Jesus clashed with the superficial religious life of his times.
15. Describe the attitude of Jesus toward health and sickness.
16. What was his attitude toward death, his own or that of others?
17. How did he regard the matter of worldly possessions?
18. What were the real sources of happiness in the thought of Jesus?
19. In what ways have you come to see Jesus more clearly through this study?

STUDY III

THE EARLY FOLLOWERS OF JESUS AND HIS "WAY"

By SHAILER MATHEWS

Jesus was more than a teacher. He was the founder and center of a group that was to develop into the great movement of the Christian religion. Therein he differed from many other men who have left noble thoughts as their contribution to the life of the world. Jesus left a religious movement composed of people who were his own followers. Without these followers, Jesus could not have been a leader. Without the group there could not have been a church. It is the stream of Christians continuing this early company about Jesus that produced and preserved the New Testament with its records of Jesus' life and teachings. All that we have seen about Jesus' use of current beliefs as the medium of his exposition of his way is doubly true of the members of the group. In order to understand Jesus we must see him through the eyes of his disciples. To that end we must understand them and how they followed his way.

I. JESUS AND REVOLUTIONARY HOPES

Men followed Jesus because they thought he would fulfil their revolutionary hopes. Read Matt. 1:1-12. Notice how the popular mind was full of expectation of a new era under the leadership of a divinely inspired leader. Josephus tells us many things about the popular movements that sprang from this expectation, and there has been preserved a considerable literature in which it was expressed in a sort of code language. This literature is called Apocalypses, that is, revelations of the future. Through them all run the same conceptions that the New Testament discloses as moving the masses to whom John the Baptist and, after him, Jesus preached.

The Jewish people of Palestine were developing a revolutionary psychology. Their minds were full of the desire to drive out the Romans, revenge the injuries done them, establish a new empire over all the world. They knew such expectations could never be realized without divine help, and so they awaited some leader empowered miraculously by God's spirit, who should lead them to world conquest and the establishment of the new kingdom. Such expectation is called the Messianic Hope, and the awaited leader was the Messiah, that is, the one on whom God was to "pour" his Spirit so as to enable him to be the King, the Judge and the Avenger. Violence was a part of this expectation just as it is in all revolutionary hopes. The fact that it was religious no more prevented the messianic hope from desire for blood revenge, than the Christian beliefs of the medieval church prevented persecution.

To these eager, reckless, religious revolutionary masses Jesus had preached, telling them that the Kingdom was close at hand. But he had tried to make them believe that it must come through love rather than violence. In part he succeeded, but not entirely. Those who utterly failed to share in his faith in the power of God's love and the practicability of love as a basis of social life, he did not attempt to organize. But those who did believe in his message and who came to think of him as the Christ he gradually drew to himself and some of these he shaped into a small but growing group who accompanied him as he went about the land, preaching the coming of the Kingdom, and urging men to see its true nature as the Family of God. He did not select them at once, but only when his movement had grown so widespread as to demand specially trained helpers. At first there were only twelve, afterward there were seventy such followers.

The twelve disciples.—The selective process by which Jesus separated between the crowds and those whom he intended to make his immediate followers is clearly seen in Mark 1:22; 2:13-17; 3:13-19. This group of the twelve disciples should be well studied. Arrange the names of the Twelve as given in the four lists, Mark 3:13-19; Matt. 10:2-4; Luke 6:12-19; Acts 1:13 in parallel columns. Notice the similarity in the order of the names. It will appear that the first, the fifth, and the ninth names are always the same, Peter, Philip, and James. It will also appear that the names of those associated with these three are the same so far as they can be identified although the order in the list is not the same. Does not this arrangement in, so to speak, three communities, argue that there was some organization in Jesus' group of immediate associates? Is not the same conclusion favored by the fact that they had a common purse? John 13:29.

One should study the character of each one of these men. In the case of Peter and John, we have a considerable amount of information. In the cases of Andrew, Philip, Thomas, and Judas who betrayed him, there is also some information.

One of these men, Simon, the Zealot, may have gained the name through having belonged to the radical revolutionary group of the Zealots.

The attitude of these men toward Jesus is clearly to be seen in Mark 8:27-30; Matt. 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-21. They believed that Jesus was the Christ. They did not, apparently, think that he was yet engaged in Messianic work, since he was not doing the sort of thing which they expected the Messiah to do. Nor were they ready to have Jesus tell them what his task really was. Even John the Baptist had difficulty in seeing him as Christ: Matt. 11:2-6; Luke 7:18-23; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Mark 9:33, 34; 10:35-45; Matt. 20:20-28. Do not these facts make it plain that the underlying expectation of the early disciples was that Jesus would fulfil the nationalistic religious hopes of the times? If this conclusion is correct, it is easy to understand the words of Jesus to Peter at Caesarea Philippi, Matt. 16:17; as well as his comment upon the difficulty which confronts him as a fulfiller of prophecy, Matt. 11:12-14.

Is it not therefore clear that the central loyalty of the disciples to Jesus was less that of students following a teacher, and more that of enthusiasts following a leader?

II. GROUP ORGANIZATION

We must distinguish the directions to the group from the "Way" of Jesus. That they regarded themselves as in some way organizing their lives in accordance with a new ideal is to be seen in the fact that they were known as followers of the Way, Acts 19:9; 24:14, 22. In the case of Jesus this following was literal. They left their homes and walked about Palestine with him. Agitation within the mass had already begun with John the Baptist. Around John, as around Jesus, there gathered a group of followers. Those in immediate contact with Jesus, however, were not mere listeners to his teaching but they developed a community life and certain practices. (1) They abandoned their homes and their usual mode of life, such as fishing and tax collecting. Peter declares that they have left everything to follow. Mark 10:28-31; Matt. 19:27-30; Luke 18:28-30. (2) They were sent out by Jesus as heralds of the coming Kingdom, Mark 6:7-13; Matt. 9:36-38; Luke 9:1-6. See also the directions to the Seventy, Luke 10:1-16. As a part of this mission they were to heal and cast out demons. They were to go without money, without extra clothing, and were not to enter into any social life with those whom they met.

These directions were not given to the people at large and do not form any element in the general teaching of Jesus. They were explicitly intended for those who were immediately associated with him as propagandists and preachers. The duties of the Twelve, and of the Seventy, are not to be identified with the ideals of Jesus for men at large. They formed a group within the movement and naturally were subjected to more severe discipline to develop their efficiency. It is also to be borne in mind that in the case of the disciples themselves these extreme regulations were subsequently removed by Jesus, and the disciples themselves were told in effect to live the normal life, Luke 22:35-38. It seems to be clear, therefore, that these directions, given the Twelve on a special mission and later withdrawn, are not to be identified with the Way of Jesus. They represent, rather, temporary directions as to the performance of a definite task. The Twelve were aware of this distinction as appears from Luke 12:41.

We have little information as to what changes came to the lives of those followers of the Way who did not join this group of intimate friends and representatives of Jesus. But we do know certain general characteristics. (1) They were to repent. Recall such instances as those of Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1-10. Does not his undertaking to right former acts of injustice show that moral change was involved in the following of Jesus? So, too, in the case of the woman who was a sinner, who was conscious that her sins had been forgiven and showed her loyalty to Jesus by anointing his feet, Luke 7:36-50. (2) Read Mark 1:40-44; Matt. 8:2, 4; Luke 5:12-14. Does not this incident show clearly that Jesus did not expect his followers to

abandon the Jewish religion? This is still further carried out by the act of the cleansing of the temple, Mark 11:15-19; Matt. 21:12-17; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-22. It is summarized in the saying of Jesus that he did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, Matt. 5:17.

Thus, negatively and positively it appears that neither the disciples nor others in following the Way of Jesus, thought it necessary to abandon the religion of their fathers but they did judge it necessary to prepare for the inauguration of the new Jewish Kingdom of God. This preparation was moral but with the exception of the temporary methods of the Twelve they did not necessarily involve a break with the conventional life. We thus can distinguish between the practices of members of the immediate group whom Jesus chose to be with him and the large number of those who shared in their expectation and faith in Jesus, but did not leave their homes and join the group as it moved about Palestine, preaching.

The perils of "the Way."—It is not difficult to see from these facts why the leaders of the nation would be concerned for public order. The presence of one who announced the coming of the new Kingdom, and with a growing body of followers traveled back and forth over the country, calling upon the people to prepare for the great day, certainly suggested revolutionary developments. It was on the basis of this that Jesus was finally executed. Luke 23:1-3; Mark 15:2-5; 6:27; Matt. 27:11-37; John 18:28-19:22. Indeed, the Roman officials continued to interpret the movement as a political threat. Read Acts 17:1-9. This gives all the more significance to the actual practices of the disciples in response to the teaching of Jesus. He had warned them against anything like revolutionary activity. From this point of view read Matt. 5:38-41; Luke 12:58, 59. The disciples were peaceable although it would appear that just before the death of Jesus some of them carried arms, Luke 22:38-50; Mark 14:47; Matt. 26:51. There is also evidence that some of the crowds who followed him undertook to force Jesus into revolutionary activity, John 6:15. But no revolutionary action occurred, doubtless in large measure due to the fact that he refused to commit himself to the plans of these enthusiasts.

The general attitude of the inner group was that of expectation that Jesus would undertake the expected establishment of the new Kingdom. Read the account of the triumphal entry, Mark 11:1-11; Matt. 21:1-11; Luke 19:29-44 and as far as possible establish the psychology of the moment. Recall that these crowds from Galilee had not seen Jesus for a number of months and that it would be natural for them to interpret his dramatic approach to the city as an indication of his readiness to act in the capacity of a revolutionary leader. Read also the regretful words of the two disciples, Luke 24:13-21, and the inquiry in Acts 1:6.

Read again the account of the arrest of Jesus and his trial. Is it not true that the disciples found fundamental difficulty in adjusting themselves to what must have been to them a collapse of hopes. Naturally they would be oppressed by the sense of loss in the arrest of their leader, but even more in their disappointment

and the shock of the failure of the Kingdom to come. Doubtless this in part accounts for the denial of Peter, and possibly the treason of Judas, Mark 14:54, 66-72; Matt. 26:58, 69-75; Luke 22:54-62. They could not realize that Jesus would not appeal to force if he were the Christ.

III. THE NEW FAITH AND HOPE

The execution of Jesus did not destroy the community of his followers. After a few hours of panic they resumed their group life. This appears from the facts suggested by Luke 24:22; John 20:19, 24-26; 21:1, Matt. 16:16; Acts 1:13, 14; 12:12. It was this continuation of the community that guaranteed the permanency of the movement inaugurated by Jesus. The basis of this community does not seem to have been the teachings of Jesus, but common loyalty to him as the Christ. The very momentum of their community held them together during the day and a half that followed the crucifixion. Then began a new series of experiences which were destined to have an incalculably great influence upon the group. Peter, and after him other members of the Twelve, various women, then the large group of five hundred, saw the risen Christ, I Cor. 15:1-7. Just what their experiences could have been it is impossible to say precisely on the basis of the various reports. Paul himself was evidently ignorant of what the nature of the body of the risen Christ could have been or otherwise he would certainly have appealed to it in his answer to the question as to "how are the dead raised and with what body do they come?" I Cor. 15:35. His writings, the earliest documentary evidence that we have show plainly, however, that almost immediately after the death of Jesus, his disciples believed that he had risen from the dead. This faith in the resurrection became the great conviction of the Christian community. From the belief in Jesus' resurrection was to emerge what almost might be called a new philosophy of life, and a characteristically Christian morality.

This new faith of the group at Jerusalem consolidated the movement and intensified the expectation of the Messianic future. There is no clear evidence that the expectations of this early group were changed. They had expected that Jesus before his death would do the sort of work the Messiah was expected to perform, but now that they were convinced that he still lived in Heaven they believed that he would speedily return to perform the Messianic work. That is to say, their loyalty to him as the Christ continued constant. They read into this future their Jewish hopes. What they meant by "the faith" was the acceptance of him as the Christ. The expression of that faith in daily life was not so much an attempt to apply his particular principles, as to develop customs that were consistent with their faith and the approaching Kingdom which he would establish on his speedy return. The last days had come.

Read Acts chap. 2. It will appear from this account that the group of disciples believed it necessary to stay in Jerusalem. It also appears that they endeav-

ored to maintain the symmetry of the organization of twelve disciples, so that there should be one disciple to judge each of the tribes.

It is easy to picture this original group of the disciples as they met probably secretly, in some private home, Acts 12:12; John 20:19-26. There they talked over their hopes and the recollections of their master. Men and women alike were present, and the fellowship which had grown up about Jesus, now was continued by those who hoped soon to see him once more.

The persistence of this group with its expectation of immediate establishment by God of the Jewish supremacy over the world led to the maintenance of such an organization as Jesus had established. He had chosen twelve apostles and they had believed that each was to be a judge of one of the tribes of Israel. It seemed, therefore, that the vacancy caused by the suicide of Judas should be filled. The method which was then followed is to be seen in Acts 1:12-26. Matthias clearly was not elected by the Twelve. He was appointed by the Lord by means of prayer and the casting of lot. This action on the part of the community clearly shows the place which the twelve apostles were believed to occupy in anticipation of the new Kingdom and also the dependence of the Christian community upon supernatural guidance rather than democracy. The followers of the Christ believed that he was still in control of affairs.

Read Acts 2:1-42 and note particularly the following elements: (1) The risen Jesus, who is now already in the position of messianic authority, sent his spirit in fulfilment of his promise which had already been forecast by the prophets. (2) This spirit empowered such members of the community who were in the upper room, to speak in foreign languages suited to the different groups of foreigners present in Jerusalem. (3) The speech of Peter offers a line of Christian argument which develops the idea of messiahship so as to include the death and resurrection of Jesus as a part of the fulfilment of prophecy. (4) New believers were gained on account of apprehension lest the approaching day of judgment should bring them suffering. They avoided this outcome by joining the newly established messianic group by repentance and baptism as a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. (5) The community was held together by certain practices.

The Way of Jesus is thus seen to involve new experiences of God which gave to their recipients powers which they did not otherwise possess. Apparently, however, the working of miracles was limited to the apostles, Acts 2:43. Thus there reappears the distinction between the apostles and the rank and file of those who accepted Jesus as Christ. We have no definite information as to how the apostles were supported nor do we know much about their habits of life beyond the fact that they kept up their Jewish customs of going to the temple, Acts 3:1, preached the gospel, taught the new believers, organized new groups, and were channels through which the Holy Spirit came upon the believers, Acts 8:4-24. Later, the differences in the various powers given believers by the spirit were the subject of

dispute in Corinth and Paul's treatment of the subject makes it clear that all Christians were not supposed to be able to work miracles but they all had the Holy Spirit given them.

It would hardly be accurate to say that this early Christian community was composed of mystics. They had better be called "sectarian enthusiasts in Judaism." To the minds of those responsible for public order and religious regularity, their attitude would appear to threaten public peace. As the authorities had tried to crush the movement by the execution of Jesus, so now they endeavored to check its spread by the arrest of its leaders, Peter and John. Their real offense is clearly stated in Acts 4:1-22, especially verse 19, and Acts 4:23-31.

IV. THE PRACTICES OF THE FOLLOWERS OF "THE WAY"

Read Acts 2:41-47. Notice the following customs of the new Jewish "Way."
 (1) Baptism. This was a washing in water which symbolized repentance and forgiveness of sin which came to those that believed that Jesus was the Christ, and included also a profession of belief in his resurrection. (2) Prayers. Probably these are the prayers of the temple and the synagogue. (3) Breaking of bread from house to house. This was probably the first stage in the development of the Lord's Supper and was clearly neither a part of the Jewish ceremony nor performed at some central place like a church. This the community did not have. (4) Listening to the teaching of the apostles. (We can only infer that this was probably the beginning of the collection of the sayings of Jesus from which our gospels grew.) (5) The community life which found expression in the mutual sharing of property. There is no indication that there was any economic program such as communism adopted. The group of enthusiastic men and women who awaited the return of their Master from the skies, had to be fed. They apparently were not engaged in any active remunerative work. Accordingly, men who had property contributed it to the purchase of food. The story of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11 argues clearly that generosity was voluntary but that any attempt at deception was an assault upon the supernatural control of the group. It was a lie to the Holy Ghost.

It is sometimes easily said that the early Christians were a body of communists. If words mean anything, this is misleading. Anything like the communism of Russia or of those various groups which have sometimes attempted to organize their economic life on communistic principles, were altogether lacking. The early Christians were not a productive group in the sense that they produced wealth or, so far as we know, undertook to live a normal life. They maintained their solidarity, increased their numbers in Jerusalem without any attempt to set up permanent conditions. The world was shortly coming to an end and they awaited that event.

But this generosity of those who had money to give away was a characteristic of the new life. See the story of Dorcas Acts 9:36-43 and the account of the assistance of the church at Antioch to their famine-stricken brethren in Jerusalem. We

have no other important data describing the life of the early Christians in Jerusalem. It is fair, however, to suppose that they endeavored to keep the law, both ceremonial and moral, as the nation had inherited it. The new characteristics of their life were the loyalty to Jesus as Christ and the new powers which came from the Spirit of God. Just how these new powers expressed themselves beyond the speaking with tongues we cannot say.

V. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ORIGINAL CHRISTIAN GROUP TO "THE WAY"

Obviously in much of these practices and expectations of the primitive church there is nothing that can help men of our day. The Christ did not come. Miracles long since ceased. The gift of tongues is no longer expected by the church at large. The Christian community is not administered by men chosen by lot, and it no longer spends its time in feverish expectation of the end of the world. Its members are engaged in the ordinary practices of the social order to which they belong. Yet two things stand out clearly. First, loyalty to Jesus as the Christ is central, no matter how his work is conceived. Second, the spirit of love which he made central in his teaching, and which found constant expression in this early group is still the heart of Christianity.

While various peculiar practices of the Christian group are seen to be the temporary outcome of their new intense enthusiasm, the great central elements of the Christian movement stand out distinctly: the belief in God's revelation of himself as Saviour in Jesus, confidence that those who are loyal to Jesus have their sins forgiven, the experience of new spiritual powers on the part of those who are thus loyal to Jesus, the expression of these new powers in acts of good will. To this can be added the other characteristic of this early church which unfortunately has not always been felt in the history of the church, namely, the unwillingness to use coercion to bring about uniformity of belief in the community.

There is, however, more implied in the stories of the primitive church at Jerusalem than is contained explicitly in the stories themselves as given in Acts. After the first stage in the development of the Christian religion this group of eager souls determined the direction which the development of Christianity has always pursued.

(a) In addition to the points already indicated we may note the following: First the early church reinterpreted the Old Testament in the light of its knowledge of Jesus. Much that had never been regarded as messianic was now seen by them to forecast the work of Christ. Thus they found his death and suffering in prophecy as well as his resurrection. Indeed, there was almost nothing in the entire range of the new interest for which the church did not find some justification in the ancient literature of their people. The chief difficulty which the Jews had in accepting Jesus as Christ was not philosophical as in the case of Greeks who became Chris-

tians, but that of accepting one who had been crucified as the real Messiah. This difficulty was inevitable. What Jesus had done and experienced was not in accord with the current messianic expectation. But the group of those who had already accepted him was ready to develop a new explanation for the faith which had been evoked by Jesus himself. In their case as later in the history of Christianity religious experience preceded its intellectual justification. Thus by this new line of thought the Old Testament became a book sacred not only to the Jews but to all those who accept Jesus as the Christ.

(b) They also made it certain that Christianity should be a religion, not simply a system of philosophy. We have already noticed the beginnings of organization. They were to prove of much more importance than at first appeared. Although we do not know exactly when all of the different officers appeared, we can see in this early group, apostles, the Seven, and presbyters, and the church at large. If we may judge from the analogy of the selection of the Seven, these officers were chosen by lot after prayer. Since, later, after Paul, their selection seems to have been indicated in some way by the Holy Spirit, probably something of the same reliance upon divine selection was in the early church. It is, however, apparent from the statement in Acts, that the original group of Christians in Jerusalem was not as ecclesiastically minded as Christianity became after it attained its standing as an independent religion.

(c) This original group must also have begun the collection of the sayings of Jesus and the other material. We know that in all probability the Gospel of Mark is traceable to Peter while the collection of sayings which is in our first gospel is also traceable to Matthew. Thus it is altogether probable that the early church began the organization of ethical ideals in accordance with the teaching of Jesus. They certainly did practice non-resistance, even to the point of suffering persecution. Later during the siege at Jerusalem, the Christian community seems to have retired in a body rather than to engage in a war. The charity which they practiced has already been mentioned and the purity of life goes without saying. In other words, it is probable that the teaching of Jesus which was intended for the community at large as distinct from the group of the Twelve in their first relations with Jesus became the ideal of this early group. It is much to be regretted that the origins of our gospels lie in much obscurity, but if the conclusions of critical scholarship are to be held it seems that the early church had as its gospel not only the items which Paul tells the Corinthians he had received, presumably from the apostles, I Cor. 15:1, 2, but also the first records of the teachings and deeds of Christ himself. Thus "the Way" was slowly developing as the numbers of its followers increased. There was no attempt, apparently, to reproduce the directions given to the Twelve and the Seventy on their missionary journey. But the great teachings of Jesus were becoming property of the growing community of his followers.

VI. NEW DEVELOPMENTS AMONG THE FOLLOWERS OF "THE WAY" IN JERUSALEM

The original Christian community in Jerusalem, it will be remembered, was composed of Jews from Palestine. As the group expanded there emerged something of geographical pride and jealousy. Read Acts 6:1-6. Notice this cleavage in the interests of the early community and the way in which the apostles met it. There was opportunity for a church quarrel. But as it was the apostles abandoned their administration of charity funds and induced the church to select other men to take care of the charities in the place of the apostles while the latter devoted themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word, rather than of tables. Thus the spirit of organization is again seen and the movement is in the way of becoming an organized body.

The emergence of seven new leaders, apparently chosen from the non-Palestinian Jews, led to important consequences. We have no record that these Seven thus selected ever did any work in the way of charity although we may suppose they did. The only record we have of their activities is that of preaching. While the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, Philip took up the evangelization of the surrounding country, even including Samaria, Acts 8:5-40. Another member of the Seven, Stephen, began propaganda in the synagogues of Jerusalem, Acts 6:8-7:60. In his career we see the beginning of a new attitude among the early Christians. Stephen's position is briefly this: if the messianic age has really come, then the law is already outgrown. It was a position which Paul was to elaborate with great effect but one which we have no evidence that the apostles held. It immediately brought Stephen into opposition with the authorities. His arrest, unlike that of Peter and John, was not in the interests of public order but because of his theological position. Read carefully his speech, Acts 7:2-56. Notice both the charges Acts 6:11-14 and his answer. The charges are in effect that he has denied the finality of the temple worship. His reply is that God never limited his revelations to the temple, that they had always been elsewhere, that He could not be contained in any temple. The truths which the prophets had set forth had always been repudiated by the authorities of the Jewish people, and his accusers were simply carrying out the same antagonism to God.

Such a position is the logical outcome of the new messianic faith. It is natural that it should have aroused great alarm and enmity. The persecution which followed was limited, we may infer from Acts 8:1-3, to those who accepted the general position of Stephen. His execution could only have been regarded by the strict religionists of the day as a legitimate punishment for one who was not only a member of a fanatical sect, but a denier of the basal position of the Jewish people. Out of this was to come that great spread of Christian teaching which transformed the movement from that of a sect of enthusiastic Jews to an independent religion. But in this transformation of the Christian community there was no development

of new moral ideals. For the Jews the law of Moses was sufficient. For the Gentile, the case was very different. The group at Jerusalem had developed no characteristic practices which could be transferred to Gentile Christians without raising the question of their accepting the Mosaic law. Yet both classes of Christians held to the Old Testament, faith in Jesus as Christ, and the work of the Spirit.

The next step in the development of "the Way" was taken, not by the apostles of the community at Jerusalem but by those Christians who were not Jews and did not wish to become Jews. Their position was to be approved and organized by no less a person than the representative of that orthodoxy and conventionality that had executed Stephen, Saul of Tarsus.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Give reasons why the authorities feared, and the disciples hoped that Jesus would lead a revolution.
2. Suggest reasons for considering the Twelve a carefully selected and organized group.
3. What were the expectations of this group?
4. How did their lives differ from those of the other followers of Jesus?
5. What relation had moral change or renewal to membership in any group of the followers of Jesus?
6. What was the real basis of the arrest, trial, and execution of Jesus?
7. Name the most important motives which held the inner group of Jesus' followers together after his death.
8. What did "the faith" signify to these early Christians?
9. Describe the method of life of the organized body of disciples after the death of Jesus.
10. What special gifts seem to have been exercised by the Twelve alone?
11. How was the number of the Twelve interpreted, and what steps were taken to keep the number complete?
12. Name some of the religious customs practiced, both old and new.
13. What was their economic plan of life, and why was it satisfactory to them?
14. Name the outstanding contributions of this group to "the Way," (a) in beliefs, (b) in organization, (c) in the preservation of records.
15. Who were some of the early evangelists of the movement?
16. What was the ultimate aim of the preaching of these evangelists?
17. With what opposition did they meet?
18. Did this early group really understand and appreciate the teachings of Jesus, or concern itself with them?
19. To what extent had they changed their ideas of God in accordance with those of Jesus?
20. Was this group capable of making Christianity any thing other than a Jewish sect?

STUDY IV

PAUL'S EXPOSITION OF THE "WAY"

A. THE JEWS OF THE DISPERSION

By BENJAMIN WILLARD ROBINSON

Paul's exposition of the "Way" falls naturally into two divisions. The great Apostle started out on his Christian career preaching in the synagogues of the Dispersion. The "Dispersion" is the technical name applied to the little Jewish communities scattered through the Roman Empire. The Jews of the communities had scattered or "dispersed" from Palestine for various causes as will be explained later. From the synagogues of the Dispersion Paul went forth in nearly every city to speak to the non-Jewish peoples. Our present study will have to do directly with the message which Paul brought to the Jews in the cities of the Empire, and with the new "Way" of life which they found.

The career of Paul among the Dispersion is clearly and finely reflected in one group of his letters, I and II Thessalonians, Galatians, and Romans. The Book of Acts also covers this subject in chapters 9-15. The other side of Paul's work, which will be the subject of our next Study, is shown in I and II Corinthians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and in Acts 16 to 20.

In both of these Studies, it is of special importance to note how Paul's statement of the Gospel of Jesus fits exactly into the mold and framework of the historical situation. No man ever met a more definite set of circumstances, or had a more conventionalized society and body of traditions to face. Not only did Paul understand the particular situation which he was trying to influence, but he found it peculiarly necessary to talk the language of his opponents, as well as the language of his own personal world of thought. Thus, in a double sense, his letters are a product of the religious situation. To understand his exposition of the "Way," we have first to understand the Jews of the Dispersion, and then to understand Paul's personality and purpose.

I. THE ROMAN WORLD IN THE TIME OF PAUL

Read Romans 1: There is a widespread idea that the time in which Paul lived and labored was a period of extreme decline, and even degradation, in politics, in morality, and in religion. This idea is not to be accepted without careful study. We pick up a history of the Roman Empire, and find that this period of Augustus and Claudius is called the "Golden Age" of the Empire. We turn to a history of literature, and find that Vergil, Horace, Livy, Ovid, Strabo, Seneca, and Epictetus lived in the same century with Paul. We turn to the realm of morals, and find that

this was the high-tide of Stoicism, one of the noblest of ancient philosophies. We turn to the realm of religion, and find a great awakening, and a multiplication of faiths.

In short, it is possible to interpret Paul's sentence "In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4:4) as referring to a period full of promise and of honest effort. To be sure, this does not mean that Paul was an optimist in regard to the non-Christian world. No great prophet is an optimist regarding those people who have not yet listened to his message. But, from the vantage point of the twentieth century, we may look back along the course of history, and see that the civilization had progressed through thousands of years. We may say more than that; we may say that this was a time of particularly rapid growth. Never before in history had there been such a brotherhood of nations gathered together under one government. It was an era of peace, such as the world had been hoping to attain for many centuries. No great war occurred during Paul's life-time. He went about from nation to nation, as he could not have done a few centuries earlier. Whenever he went, he was protected in case of violence or insult, by the strong arm of the Roman government.

Moreover, it was a time of social progress, such as had perhaps never been paralleled. The use of one language, the vernacular Greek, in business and politics throughout the Empire, made it possible for Paul to use this same language wherever he went. He did not, like the modern missionaries, have to spend his time learning foreign idiom or vocabulary.

With this general attitude toward the first-century civilization, it is possible to look upon the Dispersion of the Jews as one of the great blessings which the world, at that time, inherited.

II. THE JEWISH DISPERSION

Read Acts 2:1-11; 10:1-8; 13:5, 14, 43: There were many causes which scattered the Jews from Palestine through the Empire. Historical research has found definite traces of more than a hundred Jewish communities along the shores of the Mediterranean. Since the days of Alexander the Great, in the third century B.C., Jews had found it easy to migrate westward. The second century B.C. witnessed repeated and continued warfare in Judea and Palestine. It was only natural that great numbers should look for more peaceful places to live. Commerce and business also attracted in the great cities.

From our vantage point, the whole era looks like a purposed and prearranged preparation for Paul's preaching. We can see the hand of God in the history. Wherever Paul went, he found his own countrymen, ready to receive him with a warm welcome. The little synagogue would consider it a privilege to hear the man who had recently come from the home community in Palestine, and who announced that he had a message.

The religion of the Jews of the Dispersion was not the same as that of Palestine. For one thing, the offering of sacrifice in the Temple at Jerusalem, as prescribed in the Law, was quite out of the question. It was possible to send a small contribution to Jerusalem, to pay the cost of having a priest give the sacrifice. But, practically speaking, the most conspicuous feature of the Jewish religion was entirely lacking in the life of the Dispersion.

The early Christians had continued, in Jerusalem, to keep the Law and fulfil their Temple obligations. Paul assumes that Christianity has outgrown this feature. He does not have to argue the question at all. Although Jesus had said nothing definite on the subject, sacrifice entirely disappears from the Christian "Way" of life, as soon as the Gospel has traveled from Palestine to the Dispersion.

The second feature of the religion of the Dispersion was a lessened emphasis upon legalism. In Palestine, the keeping of the Sabbath was very strict. Washing of hands abstaining from certain kinds of meat, were important. Particularly emphatic in Palestine were the restrictions with regard to entering the home of an uncircumcized Jew (see Acts 10). These, and a hundred other prohibitions, were softened and adapted, and interpreted by the Jews of the Dispersion. It was a case of necessity. There had to be a compromise between the keeping of the Law, and the earning of one's daily bread.

When Paul came to the Dispersion with the statement that the whole Law, as a system, was out-of-date, and that God had a new way and a new basis of judging men's lives, many hearts went out in eager response. It was what they had been waiting for these many years.

A third feature of the Judaism of the Dispersion was the broadening of their Messianic hope. The Jews of the Dispersion could not regard the other nations as "dogs" in the same sense which prevailed in Judea. When Paul came with the announcement that, in the Kingdom of God, as now revealed, there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, between Greek and barbarian, he was preaching in line with the whole growing international brotherhood of the time; he was talking to Jews who lived, not in a corner of the world, but were scattered through the nations. The old hope of a Prince of the house of David, who would rise to vanquish all their enemies, or the hope that the Heaven would some day be opened, and the love of God for His peculiar people be demonstrated amid lightning and earthquake, was somewhat tempered and internationalized.

To be sure, Jews could still hold that the great and terrible "Day" of Jehovah is coming. Read I Thess. 4:13-18; II Thess. 2:1-12. But this hope did not play the important or central rôle it did in some Jewish Palestinian writings.

The fearers of God.—In Acts 12:2; 13:16, 26, 43, 50, and many other passages a class of hearers is found who are described by the statement that they "feared God"—that is, worshiped Jehovah. Or they are described as "devout persons." These people have been the subject of much modern study. They seem to have

been members, or rather half-members, of the Jewish community. They were converts who had not been received into full membership. They had accepted the Jewish religion in the sense that, when they prayed, they prayed to Jehovah (Acts 12:2). They worshiped Jehovah, they lived upright lives according to the Jewish standard of morality, they contributed money, but, for some reason or other, they were not considered members in good standing. The probability, which amounts almost to certainty, is that these people hesitated at certain particular requirements of the Law, which were in general observed by the Jews of the Dispersion. Circumcision was usually regarded as a test commandment, by which the question of possible membership was decided.

When Paul came to the Jewish communities, with the message that this requirement of circumcision should be shelved, along with the commandments in regard to sacrifice, these people welcomed his message with open hearts. If the synagogue authorities were too conservative to adopt Paul's liberal attitude, the result was often a break. Another "synagogue," or place of worship, would be opened in some rented hall nearby, where Paul's more liberal religion could be lived and learned without hindrance.

III. PAUL'S PERSONAL QUALITIES

Read Phil. 3:5; Acts 22:3, 28; 23:16; 26:4; Gal. 1:14.

The personality of Paul enters very strongly into his presentation of the "Way." Paul was a man peculiarly adapted to his task of internationalizing the Jewish-Christian Gospel as lived by the Jerusalem Christians. Paul was both a Jew and a Roman; but this is only half the story. He was of the inner, beloved Tribe of Benjamin, educated in Pharisaic atmosphere, under the tutoring of Gamaliel at Jerusalem. On the other hand, he was not a Roman who had "with a great sum obtained this citizenship," but he was a Roman born.

What we must expect to find in Paul's interpretation of the "Way" is an elimination of those elements of Judaism which were interfering with the Gospel becoming the religion of the Empire.

In the second place, Paul combined in his personality the keenness of the Rabbi, with the democratic touch of the laboring man. Neither the picture of the great theologian, nor the description of the tent-maker and "jail-bird" is accurate. Each must be supplemented by the other.

In the third place, Paul had a fighting nature, which appears in nearly every letter. "Shall I come to you with a rod?" "If I come again, I will not spare" (II Cor. 10:13). On the other hand, he believed that the way to fight for a cause of brotherhood was the way of gentleness, and not the way of the sword. To be sure, his words at times are far from gentle, but this only underscores his principle that the word of the Gospel is like a two-edged sword and more powerful than weapons of iron.

In the fourth place, we must expect to find in his letters both optimism and despair. In fact, his was a nature peculiarly open to the highest exaltation and, on the other hand, to the keenest sense of short-coming and failure. He talked at times "in fear and much trembling" (I Cor. 2:3). He was the "least of the Apostles" (I Cor. 15:9). He was like a man "doomed to death" in the sight of a great audience in a Roman coliseum. On the other hand, he was led of the Spirit at times into exceeding high mountains. He visited the third Heaven, he was received as an "Angel of God" (Gal. 4:14). He was not a whit behind the most pre-eminent apostles (II Cor. 11:5; 12:11).

IV. PAUL'S CONVERSION

Read Acts 7:55-8:1; 9:1-19; Gal. 1:1-24.

Paul's life as a Jew.—Paul was a good Jew. He kept the Law in his youth as well as the average Jew of the Dispersion. No casual acquaintance in Tarsus would have thought of him as living anything but a model life. In fact, there was reason for his fellow Jews to think that he gave promise of becoming a great teacher and rabbi. We should not conceive of him as having been, before his conversion, a "sinner," in any ordinary sense of the word. He was, in many ways, an ideal and public-spirited citizen.

What happened at the time of the conversion? What change came in Paul's "Way" of living? There are some hints in Rom. 7:10 and elsewhere which indicate that the Jewish "Way" did not satisfy him in those pre-Christian days. He says, for example, that he had not known coveting, except the Law had said, "Thou shalt not covet"; but sin finding occasion, through the commandment, began to work all manner of coveting. "When the commandment came sin revived, and I died. Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of this death?" (vs. 24). His words would seem to indicate that his efforts to keep the Jewish Law had proved so difficult and deadening that his life had lost all its vitality and freshness. The suggestion is irresistible that there was included, in the conversion experience, a sudden realization that the old legal system which the Dispersion was finding so irksome, was doomed, that God had revealed to him a new Gospel by which a man of the Dispersion might be freed from this relic of Palestinian life.

Parallel with this experience under the Law, was the knowledge which he had of the beautiful lives of many early Christians. The story of Stephen is plainly introduced by the author of Acts as introductory to Paul's conversion. Stephen, even in the presence of death, saw the Heaven open; he received into his soul a vision of God, which gave him power to withstand every persecution. This was just the kind of power which Paul needed. He was not under outward persecution, but under inward oppression. As he would have expressed it, he died almost a daily death, and felt there was none to raise. If Stephen could receive the Holy Spirit, through fellowship with Jesus, why should not he, Paul, receive somehow such an uplifting Spirit which would deliver him out of his bondage and death?

It is not our purpose here to enter into any extended discussion of the exact nature of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. But the bearing of that upon his teaching of the "Way" of life, is clear. It includes three elements; First, he was free from the bondage and oppression and the vain effort to keep the thousand commandments of the Jewish Law. He might still keep the Law to some extent, but the sense of oppression was gone. Second, he received into his soul a new power, a new optimism, a new courage to live. The new Spirit baptized his soul, vitalized his being, made him, not a slave of life any longer, but its master. Third, these had come to him through the name of Jesus, and through the voice of Jesus speaking in his soul. Henceforth he would live as a disciple of this new master; the Christian "Way" would be his way, because he had found peace and liberty and life. He would go forth and use the natural fire of his nature in the cause of Christ.

V. THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Read Acts 13 and 14.

The object of this study is not to draw a map or make a list of places visited on Paul's first great campaign with Barnabas. Our plan as before is to form an idea of the "Way" of life, which Paul introduced among the Jews of the Dispersion.

They had been living according to the Old Testament Law, as far as they were able to keep it. Where they were not able to keep all the commands of sacrifice or purification, they were using their own common sense. At Jerusalem, there was a large school of rabbis, who were interpreting the Law for the residents of Judea. But in the cities of the Empire, there was considerable latitude of view and practice. A Jew avoided contact with the "heathen" so far as possible. The Jewish Scripture plainly taught this. He observed the Sabbath as far as possible, he submitted to the rite of circumcision, in spite of the ridicule of non-Jewish people. He observed many other Laws very carefully, some of which appeal to all men as high and noble, and some of which were decidedly provincial and narrow.

When Paul came to a synagogue community in Antioch of Pisidia, or elsewhere, he gave no uncertain or indefinite picture of the childishness of some of the Old Testament commandments. God had brought the Jews up out of slavery. God had tended them as if He were a "nursing-father" (Acts 13:18). Paul told the Jews of his audience that times had changed, that conditions were different, that God had always promised to send one who would give a fuller revelation, that, in Jesus, we find a Saviour who can save us from the impossible proposition of trying to live according to the old Law. In Jesus, a man is not only forgiven any transgression of the Law (Acts 13:38) but he is justified once and for all.

The new "Way" of life was plain. A new law of brotherhood, as revealed in the teaching of Jesus, supplants and supersedes the Mosaic Law. A Jew will still keep the Sabbath. But he will say that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. He will put the law of love and fellowship first and foremost in his daily living. He will continue to keep the Law, so far as it is profitable, but

he now understands that the sole basis of acceptance with his God is the moral and ethical tone of his living, particularly as it affects his kindness and mercy toward his brother.

Justification.—The word "justify," which occurs in Acts 13:39 and many other passages, is one of the key words to an understanding of Paul's "Way." On the old basis, a Jew kept the Law in the idea that a day of reckoning will come at the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom. Every Jew will appear before the Judgment Seat. If his record is right, he will be pronounced "justified" and will enter into his reward. This is what is known as the "forensic" sense of the word "justification."

Paul, because of his own experience with the Law, and because of his contact with Greek ideas, which will be described in our next study, presented a very different idea of justification to these Jews. They only partially understood it. In fact, Paul many times, in Galatians and elsewhere, is obliged to use the word in its old "forensic" meaning, in order to talk to his hearers in their own language.

Paul's own idea is that religion has its chief value in the present, rather than the future. He does not give up the future idea, but he throws all his emphasis into the present. He himself had been saved from a "wretched" existence which he calls "a living death" (Rom. 7:9, 10, 24). This is, for him, salvation.

The word "justification," very fortunately and happily, in Greek literature had a double meaning and a double usage. That is the reason Paul is so fond of the word. The word "justification" is the same word used in Rom. 3:21, translated "righteousness." In fact, the noun was more often used by Plato and other leaders of Greek philosophy in this sense than in the Jewish sense.

Paul's idea of "righteousness" is "dynamic" and moral, rather than "forensic." This is the contribution which Paul made to the Jews of the Dispersion. They began to think less about the future and less about a divine ledger of debit and credit. They began to think more about present state of heart, more about ennobling the soul and fitting it for the higher destiny, more about spiritual living and brotherly love.

VI. PAUL'S GREATEST BATTLE

Read Acts 15; Gal. 2: Not even Luther faced a more determined opposition to a new principle of religion than did Paul. As Luther acted in direct defiance of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, so Paul found very quickly that the entire organization of professional Judaism was aroused against him. From the point of view of Jerusalem, his new teaching looked like a complete repudiation of the whole legalistic system of Judaism. It had the appearance of completely doing away with the validity of all the commandments of the Scriptures.

The issue between Paul and the "Judaizers" was acute and intense. There seemed to be no possibility of compromise. Men from Antioch reported to the Apostles at Jerusalem that the situation was impossible. Feeling became so intense that even Peter, who had been daring to eat at table with Gentile Christians, was forced to withdraw.

There was but one thing to do, if Paul wished to preserve any semblance of fellowship with the Apostles. This was to have a conference in Jerusalem, at which the subject would receive fair treatment, and at which some sort of decision would be reached.

Again, it is not our purpose to study the detailed history of the situation. The result of the conference described in Acts 15 and Galatians 2 was a division of territory. Paul agreed not to preach his Gospel in Palestine, or any Jewish country (Gal. 2:9). The Apostles, on their side, gave him the right hand of fellowship to go to Gentile lands with his Gospel. This decision, of course, did not please the non-Christian Jews, who had made a desperate fight to prevent the decision. These Jews later caught Paul in Jerusalem, and were really the final cause of his martyrdom.

VII. THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

Read Galatians 3 and 4; Romans 8: The conference gave Paul new courage to preach his idea of the Christian "Way." He went forth again, more determined than ever before, to tell the Jews of the Dispersion "that a man is not justified by the works of the Law" in any manner whatsoever (Gal. 2:16).

He tells the Galatians that the Law was only temporary, that even Abraham, the patron saint of Judaism, had no Law. He argued from the Old Testament itself, that "the righteous shall live by faith" (Gal. 3:11, quoted from Hab. 2:4); and "the Law is not of faith" (Gal. 3:12). He uses many other arguments which it is not our place here to review.

As Paul was welcomed by great numbers of the Jews of the Dispersion, he told how he, himself, had been freed from the oppression of the old religion. He was a living example of the optimism and buoyancy and fullness of life which he preached. Jews everywhere were caught by the contagion of it. They were filled with his spirit, and the spirit of Jesus.

The new "Way" became so plainly superior to the old that Paul at one time had to answer the question whether non-Christian Jews will be saved at all (Rom. 9-11). It was a difficult question, and Paul wrestled with it until his heart was sore within him. His answer was that God, in His own way, somehow, sometime, will also save His chosen people as he was saving the Gentiles. It was an indefinite but a truly Christian answer.

One of the finest and best ways of describing Paul's "Way," as distinguished from the Jewish "Way," is to say that Judaism was a negative religion, as compared with the positive freedom and activity of Paul's Christian "Way." Nowhere in Scripture is this so beautifully depicted as in Galatians 5: "Walk by the Spirit," says Paul, "and you will not fulfill the lust of the Flesh." It is Paul's way of saying that we can graduate from the petty, physical passions and the laws regarding physical matters, by rising into the higher realm of a spiritual walk with God. Instead of avoiding what is degrading, we should reach out after what is uplifting. Instead of repeating the Decalogue each morning after breakfast, or wearing

a scroll of the prohibitions upon our foreheads, as some of the old rabbis did, we should do as the modern Boy Scouts do—we should resolve each day to do some positive service to someone. Shall we keep our minds upon the terrible and fearful list of things to be avoided, as given in Gal. 5:19-21? Or shall we turn to the list of fruits of the spirit, where "there is no law"?

Paul's "Way" is to bear fruit, and the fruits which he bids us produce are "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, generosity, trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Is the world of today growing worse or growing better? How was it in Paul's day?
2. What elements in first-century civilization favored Paul in his missionary career?
3. How did the religion of the Dispersion differ from the religion of the Jews of Jerusalem?
4. Who were the "fearers of God"? How did their "Way" of living differ from that of the Gentiles?
5. What personal qualities did Paul have, which contributed to his Christian "Way"?
6. Was Paul a sinner before his conversion? How did his daily life after his conversion differ from his previous life?
7. What were the influences which led to his conversion?
8. Did the Jews of the Dispersion welcome Paul's preaching?
9. What elements in Paul's message were new to the Dispersion? What elements were unchanged? What new elements were welcomed? What new elements were chiefly responsible for the opposition to Paul?
10. What was the Jewish idea of "justification"?
11. What is "forensic" justification?
12. What was Paul's teaching concerning justification?
13. What is the meaning of the word "dynamic" in relation to justification?
14. How was the Jerusalem conference called? What was the issue to be decided? What was the decision?
15. What would be Peter's personal opinion about the keeping of the Law? (a) In Palestine? (b) Outside of Palestine?
16. What arguments does Paul advance in Galatians to prove that the Christian does not need to keep the commandments of Scripture? Do you think that modern Christians of today are bound by the commandments of the Old Testament?
17. What is the religious value of the Jewish Scriptures for today?
18. What is the relation between Paul's pre-Christian religion and his later Christian "Way"?
19. Name the fruits of the spirit. What would you add to this list?

STUDY V

PAUL'S EXPOSITION OF THE "WAY"

B. THE GENTILES

By BENJAMIN WILLARD ROBINSON

Study IV was concerned with the Jews in the synagogues of the various cities of the Roman Empire. The present study has to do with the people beyond the circle of Judaism. A person not a Jew was called by the Jews, a "Gentile." Since most of the people of the Empire spoke the Greek language, and had, to a certain extent, absorbed Greek culture, the term "Greeks" was often applied in a general sense, to non-Jewish people (compare Acts 11:20).

In this present study, the terms "Greek" and "Greeks" do not have reference particularly to nationality, in the strict sense, but are more inclusive.

The message of Paul to the non-Jewish people of the various cities he visited is given to us at length in some of the letters of Paul, particularly the Corinthian letters, Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians. The Book of Acts also gives us important information in chapters 16-20.

I. STOICS AND EPICUREANS

Read Acts chaps. 16, 17 (note Acts 17:18).

The history of Greek philosophy has always been fascinating to modern minds, but it was not until recent years that the actual contact of Christianity with the current Greek philosophy of the first century was clearly defined and sympathetically studied. Just as in foreign mission fields today, there is a tendency to give much credit to whatever of good may be found in the philosophies and religions of other nations, so, in the study of first-century culture, recognition has been given to many fine and noble qualities of the philosophies and religions of that date.

Epicureanism was not all bad. We should not judge it by the modern English word "epicure." Epicurus was, as a matter of fact, a manly personality. He stood for the truth that we should not let our present lives be hampered by fears and superstitions. We should give up the ghosts and ghostly notions of primitive religions. To be sure, Epicurus carried the doctrine so far as to say that we should live our lives as though there were no hereafter. But he did not deny the existence of God or approve physical license and excess.

In a remote sense, he helped to lead the way out of the appalling superstition of his day, into a greater sense of man's freedom for fuller and larger development.

Stoicism was the most uplifting philosophy of ancient times. It was a philosophy not a religion. It paved the way for better and more spiritual religion than

any of the inherited faiths. If Epicureanism was a negative preparation, which swept away the cobwebs and dispelled the petty superstitions of the old religions, Stoicism may be regarded as a positive preparation, shedding the light of a new day and setting the house in order for a new tenant.

The fundamental teaching of Stoicism was allied to the philosophy of Plato. Plato found a dualism in human life. There is the material, the physical, the transitory, the imperfect; and over against this is the ideal toward which men strive, the spiritual, the immaterial, the Eternal. The Stoics held that God is an immaterial and invisible Spirit, guiding all things. A man's soul is akin to the spiritual. In fact, Epictetus, perhaps the greatest of the Stoics, is famous for his statement that we are all of us "fragments of God," because each one of us has a spiritual nature or soul, a spark of the divine. The Stoics practiced the presence of an indwelling God. This philosophy raised men above the temptations and trials of the flesh. It exalted human life and enabled men to live a superphysical existence. This Stoic "Way" of life was, in many respects, not far from the Christian "Way."

II. CURRENT RELIGIONS OF THE FIRST CENTURY

Read Acts chaps. 18-20.

The Stoic philosophy made possible a much higher type of religion than had existed in the preceding centuries. To be sure, people in Ephesus still cried, on occasion, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:28). But there were also other religions more in line with the enlightened life of the day. One of these religions is known as the "Eleusinian Mysteries." This was really the national religion of the Greeks.

In the far-distant past, it was founded upon the story of Persephone. Every book of Greek mythology has this story. The beautiful young maiden, daughter of Demeter, was picking flowers one day, when she was snatched away by Aides, or Pluto, the god of the underworld, the world of the dead. When her mother, Demeter (symbolic of Mother Earth) discovered the theft, she was inconsolable. She wept and mourned until a compromise was arranged, by which Pluto, the god of the dead, gave back the girl to her mother for six months, on condition that, at the end of six months, he might have her again for another six months. The legend, of course, is a story of the alternation of winter and summer. Mother Earth rejoices in the spring, as over the return of a long-lost daughter. She mourns and weeps when fertility and life have been snatched away to the realms of the dead.

This story became the foundation of a religion of very wide appeal. Anyone who has read the modern novel *If Winter Comes* easily understands the teaching of this religion. It was this. As truly as Persephone came back from the realm of the dead, as truly as winter yields to spring and summer, so truly may a man, though he be dead, yet live again. This teaching was applied in a double way. There was the assurance that, out of death at the end of life, there comes a resurrec-

tion in the life hereafter, and there was also the present experience that the sorrows of life cannot overwhelm, but must give way to brighter days and to the victory of the spirit.

The relation of all this to Stoicism is plain and simple. Stoicism taught the presence of an indwelling Spirit, uplifting and exalting. The religion we have been describing said to any man: "Join the great religion which is as true and unquestionable as the alternation of winter and summer. When you join and share in the sacraments and rituals, a new supply and fullness of Divine Spirit will exalt you above your old life, as far as the springtime is above the coldness and darkness of winter. As surely as Persephone came back from the dead, so surely shall you be freed from darkness and death, and transported into a springtime of life and fruitfulness."

There were other religions, such as "the Mysteries of Attis," which were very similar. There was a bad side to some of these religions. But the superiority of the Christian religion has become so plainly established in modern times that it is no longer necessary to hunt for evil things to say about non-Christian religions. We can afford to look on the good side.

Anyone taking this sympathetic attitude toward the religions which Paul met will find the pages of his letters full of meanings which cannot otherwise be understood. Paul also taught that the Spirit of God may dwell in us bringing life out of death, and beauty out of darkness.

III. PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIANS

Read I Corinthians.

In all ancient literature, there is no document which more directly and definitely shows us the "Way" of living which it champions, in contrast to an older and inferior "Way" than this letter. In the first chapter Paul tells of the "wisdom" of the Greeks (1:22). His expressions show that he has reference to the philosophies, particularly Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Platonism. They are good, intelligent systems, but they fail to inspire to noble, unselfish, sacrificial service. The story of Jesus and his death upon the Cross for others, has more power to save than any philosophy. This is the Christian "Way."

In chapter 2, Paul speaks of the "mystery" which the Christian Apostle possesses (2:7). His reference here, as in many other passages where he uses the word "mystery," is to the current religions described above, which are generally known as the "mystery religions." Paul's assertion is that there is nothing of value in any of these religions which Christianity does not possess.

In chapter 3, the expression "I fed you with milk" is again suggestive of the Mysteries of Attis, in which the new converts drank milk, in the conviction that they were "born again," as they expressed it, and were growing to manhood in a new life.

In chapter 4, Paul again speaks of the "mysteries."

Our chief purpose in this study is to learn the new "Way" of life among the Greeks, as Paul taught it to them. Along with the constant practice and cultivation of the Spirit of God within them, went a larger emphasis upon personal purity (I Cor. 5 and 6), than any other religion of the Empire had ever taught. We can, as through a telescope, see men turning aside from the loose personal morality of the day, and climbing to the Christian standard, through the power of the Spirit of Jesus.

Paul's advice in chapter 7 in regard to marriage has often been misunderstood. We must frankly admit that Paul advised some of the Corinthian Christians not to marry, or at least to postpone it. We must clearly understand that Paul's situation was not our situation. We cannot assume that Paul, in our day, or in a different city and circumstances, would have given the same advice. Paul had not given up his Jewish hope that the Kingdom was to be established very soon. He could not have the perspective of history which we have. He could not see our vision of a gradual reconstruction of human society. But there were many other things which he did see, with consummate clearness.

Chapters 8 and 10 present another problem of daily conduct, which Corinthian Christians faced. Can a man buy the cheaper meat which has been sacrificed to an idol? (10:25). Paul says that the only basis for decision is the good influence which we should have in uplifting our brothers. The same principle applies to the question whether a Christian may attend an idol feast (8:10).

After facing the question of his own Apostleship in chapter 9, he warns, in chapter 10, against every sort of impurity or idolatry, and mounts to the supreme statement in verse 23, "All things are lawful; but not all things edify."

There are some who think that Paul should not have ventured to dictate the style of women's clothes, as he seems to do in chapter 11! We must recognize that this letter, like many others, was written as a private letter, addressed to a small group in Corinth, and was never intended for publication.

In reading the story of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in I Corinthians 11, it is instructive and suggestive to read the letter which Pliny the Younger wrote from Asia Minor, in the year 110, to the Roman Emperor, about the Christians. He writes that they were "accustomed to come together on a fixed day before daylight and to sing responsively a song unto Christ as God: and to bind themselves with an oath, not with a view to the commission of some crime, but, on the contrary, that they would not commit theft, nor robbery, nor adultery, that they would not break faith, nor refuse to restore a deposit when asked for it. When they had done these things, their custom was to separate and to assemble again to partake of a meal. . . ."

A beautiful life it was which these groups of Greek Christians began to live. The division into two choirs which sang responsively, the mutual promise not to

steal or commit adultery or to break faith, the common meal together, were elements in the Christian "Way" which appealed to larger and larger numbers, until the Christian religion became the greatest blessing to which the human race has fallen heir.

Chapters 12 and 14 contain very instructive and interesting revelations of the difficulties which these early Christians had in their meetings. The assurance of an indwelling Spirit carried many beyond the dictates of strict etiquette and common sense. There were many who practiced faith healings and other "miracles" (12:9, 10). There were many who wished to prophesy, i.e., to testify in meeting. There were many who felt they could "speak with tongues" and who wished to exhibit their ability, sometimes to the edification of the audience, and sometimes to a completely useless usurpation of time. Many liked to think that they were so full of the Spirit that the Spirit should be allowed to talk, or sing, or pray, without interference or human control.

To all these Paul answers emphatically that "the Spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace" (14:32, 33).

It is in this connection that Paul gives expression to the greatest poem on Christian love which the world has ever known. If I speak with tongues and have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries, and have not Love, I am nothing. Spiritual gifts were not new, they were known to the other religions. The supreme distinction of the Christian "Way" was the primacy of love expressed in service and fellowship.

Finally, Paul exhorts his Corinthian friends (chapter 15) to live in the light of eternity, to recognize that, though men's bodies perish, their souls have an everlasting destiny. Death is swallowed up in victory. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, let us also bear the image of the heavenly" (15:49).

IV. THE NEW POWER AND THE NEW LIFE

Read Philippians and Philemon.

The new power for a higher and freer "Way" of life which Paul had discovered in the days of his conversion, was carried over into many different applications in the course of his career. One of the most interesting incidents was that of the runaway slave, who had escaped from his master, Philemon, and had found his way to Paul. Paul was in prison at the time, perhaps in Rome, possibly in Ephesus. The slave, Onesimus, had undoubtedly heard of Paul's preaching of "freedom" of life in the power of Jesus. Paul had been "emancipated," as he expresses it so constantly in his letters. Onesimus, too, wanted to be emancipated.

Here is a typical example of the manner in which the religion of Jesus finds different application in different ages. Paul could not anticipate modern conditions, nor dream of the Civil War, waged over the issue of slavery. To Paul, it seemed plain Christian duty that the slave should return to his master. A literalistic way

of using Scripture would say that Paul countenanced slavery and set us an example by returning the runaway slave. But a more historical view says that, while Paul did not undertake to change the institution of slavery, he did, on the other hand, write to Philemon a most startling and revolutionary bit of advice. He told the master to welcome the runaway and treat him as a "brother beloved," "no longer as a slave" (Philemon 16). Paul further promises to make good whatever Onesimus has stolen on his departure.

Another and different illustration of the new "Way" meets us in the letter to the Philippians. This has sometimes been called the only letter in which Paul has no criticism, but only praise, for the Christian life and spirit of his readers. Four different times the Philippians had sent a gift to Paul (Phil. 4:16; II Cor. 11:9; Phil. 2:25). It is a beautiful picture of mutual fellowship and helpfulness. "Re-joice" is one of the key words of the letter.

Paul's whole general conception of the new power and the new life, he expresses in terms of the current Greek dualism, which held that a normal man has two sides in his nature—the spiritual and the physical. "Live by the spirit," not by the "flesh" (Gal. 5:16, 25). This contrast which we do not find in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, comes to have a central place in Paul's letters. Paul is expressing in Greek dualistic terms, the same general principle which Jesus expresses in simple Jewish vocabulary.

Paul thinks of the spiritually-minded man and woman as constituting a new race, quite distinct from the old animal race of men who lived according to the dictates of fleshly desire. To make his meaning clear, Paul says that the creation story of the Garden of Eden has been re-enacted in a different realm. All things are become new. Christ was the second Adam (I Cor. 15:45; Rom. 5:12, 17). Anyone who lives in Christ is a "new creature." This idea Paul carries out at great length. The spirit of Christ enters into a man, and the man lives in the Spirit of Christ. So close is the union with Jesus that our sufferings for the sake of righteousness are a sharing with Christ in his suffering. We suffer with him (Rom. 8:17), we are crucified with him (Gal. 2:20), we die with him (Rom. 6:8), we are buried with him (Col. 2:12), we are raised with him (Rom. 6:4), and live with him (Rom. 6:8). This spiritual existence and this union with Christ become clearer when studied in the light of certain expressions which he uses such as "the love of Christ."

V. THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Read Colossians and Ephesians.

One of the least understood expressions in Paul is the "love of Christ." The phrase is one of a long list. The "hope of Christ," the "power of Christ," and many others, will be noticed when once the expressions are understood. When Paul says, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14), what does he mean? Is it the love of Christ for us, which he showed in his death on the cross in our behalf? Or

is it our love for Christ? A careful study of Paul's letters, and of his general mystical temperament, shows that neither of these two meanings was uppermost in his thought.

His thought is rather of an indwelling power in us, which carries us onward and upward, from one noble deed to another. The idea is allied to his conception of the working of the Spirit. The love of Christ is not merely his love for us, or our love for him, but is a Christ-like love, or, still better, a Christ-love. Paul writes, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." He feels himself to be a re-incarnation of the same Spirit which was incarnate in Jesus.

Other expressions make this mystical indwelling Christ still more real to us. "The hope of Christ" (I Thess. 1:3), is not merely a hope of Christ's coming, nor Christ's hope for our salvation, but it is that marvelous optimism which fills our souls as a result of Christ and his Spirit dwelling in us.

The "faith of Christ" which is frequently translated by the inadequate words "faith in Christ" (Gal. 2:16), means a Christlike confidence dwelling in us. We are saved, not by believing something about Jesus, but by this faith in God and in the triumph of the good, which comes to us when we receive Jesus into our lives.

The peace of Christ, the gentleness of Christ, the patience of Christ, are all chords in the harmony of the soul which knows Jesus in the new mystical life of the Spirit. Men who followed Paul's exposition of the Jesus "Way" of living, felt themselves enriched with the "riches of Christ." They had the "blessing of Christ," the "fullness of Christ."

In this super-earthly existence, they received the "power of Christ," so that they could "do all things."

VI. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

In our previous study, we undertook to state what Paul meant by justification. The word, as Paul used it, took on a meaning for the present, as distinguished from the Jewish references to the future Day of Judgment. We have now reached the point where we may define somewhat more exactly what Paul meant by the word "Faith." What is it which saves us? The answer to this question would give us the highest and inmost thought of Paul's "Way" of life. Faith, as we have said in the preceding paragraph, is a trustful and confident attitude toward God, which we attain through fellowship with Jesus. It is more than that. It is a power for righteousness which takes the place of the old legal system.

It is an emancipating and uplifting power. When the Apostles heard that Paul was preaching a Gospel of absolute freedom, they were surprised and shocked. The conservative Jews said that, if a man is allowed free rein, he will live a life of lust and selfishness.

Paul put a new sentence into the world's creed. The old dogma "I Believe in God" he supplemented with the dogma "I believe in man, filled with the Spirit

of Jesus" (Gal. 5:16). This is salvation, not the doing of any acts in accordance with any schedule of duty or law, but the ennobling of the soul, through the contact with the Spirit of God, in Jesus.

Luther, in inaugurating the Protestant Reformation, had a similar idea. The one throws light upon the other. In his treatise on Christian Liberty he says that no work done for a reward or to avoid punishment can be called good. In order to do really noble works, a man must first be assured of his own salvation. Life is not a probation. The good works a man does are done out of a grateful heart. "Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works. A man is justified by faith alone and not by any works . . . and in perfect freedom does gratuitously all that he does, seeking nothing either of profit or salvation. . . . Here is the truly Christian life; . . . when a man applies himself with joy and love and . . . serves others voluntarily and for naught."

This is the Christian "Way," according to Paul. In reading his letters, it is of paramount importance to understand that many of his words are relics from older systems. Words like "reconciliation," "forgiveness," "emancipation," "adoption," "testament," should not be understood in an antiquated, theological sense. Paul felt that the new life, as compared with the old, was like the joy of friends "reconciled" after long estrangement. The new "Way" was like the new status of a man who has been involved in heavy debt and has suddenly been "forgiven" all. It is like the glow of the slave on the day when he is "bought" out of slavery. It is better than being "born again," rejuvenated into a new life. It is like being "adopted" out of an orphan asylum, into a great home. It is like falling heir, by a new will and "testament," to great "riches."

VII. PAUL'S MESSAGE TO AMERICA

It is quite possible to say that Paul could not have any message to America, because he could not foresee American civilization and could not anticipate American conditions. But this is not the true way to understand Paul's genius. There are three things which we may say in regard to his message for us.

In the first place, he poured out his life in ministering to the needs of his day. We shall be true disciples of him if we show a like completeness of devotion to the solution of our problems. More than that, Paul was eminently successful. It may well be asked whether there was any Roman citizen in the ancient day who contributed more to the spiritual ennobling of his fellow-men than did Paul.

In the second place, there were certain definite ideas which Paul had, which may be applied with great power to modern American conditions. He said that in Christ there is no distinction between Greek and Barbarian, between Jew and Roman. There is neither bond nor free, man or woman. Moreover, his great thesis that religion is a matter of spirit, and not of law, comes very close to our hearts in these days.

In the third place, however, we must take unto ourselves a large and important responsibility. We must state clearly to ourselves those modern conditions which Paul could not anticipate. The sanctity of the family and the importance of the home, the necessity for large programs of social betterment and welfare, are our responsibility. There is need for closest fellowship between all scientific efforts to enlarge human knowledge, and all programs for the bringing to pass of the Golden Age which we all are confident is not far away.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe the good points of Epicureanism.
2. What was the teaching of Stoicism? How related to the philosophy of Plato? Who was Epictetus?
3. What was the difference between a philosophy and a religion?
4. Tell the story of Persephone, and give its symbolism. Is there any similar teaching in Christianity?
5. What is the meaning of the expression "fullness of life"?
6. What was the good side of the Mystery Religions?
7. Why did Paul write to the Corinthians? What were their problems?
8. What did Pliny write about the "Way" of Life of the Christians whom he knew?
9. Name the various spiritual gifts. Is love a gift of the spirit? What is the relation of love to the other gifts?
10. What was the occasion of Paul's letter to Philemon?
11. Does Paul's action in returning a slave set an example for us? If not, why not?
12. What was the occasion of Paul's letter to the Philippians?
13. What was the "Way" of life reflected in Philippians?
14. In what sense is Jesus a second Adam? How are we akin to him in our Christian living?
15. Give the significance of the expression "love of Christ."
16. What is the "hope of Christ"? The "peace of Christ"? The "blessing of Christ"? The "fullness of Christ"?
17. How are we saved by the "faith of Christ"?
18. What is the meaning of "faith" in the expression "justification by faith"?
19. What is the meaning of "reconciliation," "emancipation," "freedom," "adoption"?
20. Does Paul have any message for America today?

STUDY VI

THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS AND THE "WAY"

By SHIRLEY J. CASE

I. THE SETTING OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

During the first quarter century of Paul's Christian career, he busied himself with missionary labors in the territory lying around the northeastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. In the latter part of the first chapter of his epistle to the Galatians, he tells us that after three years of work in and about the city of Damascus, he passed by way of Jerusalem to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. While here Antioch was his principal place of residence. From chapters 13 and 14 of the Book of Acts, we learn that he, in company with Barnabas, set out from Antioch on an evangelistic tour into Asia Minor, where they established churches in the cities of Galatia. Returning from this journey, they visited Jerusalem where they discussed with the Jerusalem church the question of whether it was necessary for Gentile Christians to submit to the law of Moses, particularly to the rite of circumcision. This meeting is described in the first ten verses of the second chapter of Galatians and in the fifteenth chapter of Acts. On returning to Antioch, Paul and Barnabas parted company, as we learn from Galatians 2:13, and Acts 15:39.

On his next missionary journey, Silas is the chief companion of Paul. Acts, chapter 16 tells us that this tour carried Paul up through Asia to Troas and across into Europe. He moved on through Macedonia and down into Greece, finally arriving at Corinth, where he resided for a year and six months (Acts 18:11). As a result of his labors in this city an important Christian church was founded.

After visiting Syria once more (Acts 18:22) Paul set out again for Asia Minor, this time taking up his residence at the important city of Ephesus, where for two years he continued to preach Christianity to those who came regularly to hear him, in a hall which he engaged for this purpose in the school of a pagan teacher named Tyrannus (Acts 19:9). While in Ephesus he heard of the quarrels that were going on in the church at Corinth, but was so busy with his work that he was unable immediately to visit Corinth and straighten out the dispute. He describes the trouble in I Cor. 1:10-17. But the contentious Christians in Corinth were not easily pacified. A considerable time elapsed and a number of letters went back and forth before a happy solution was finally discovered. Thereupon Paul paid a visit to this old missionary field and spent a short time there with his former friends.

This is the setting out of which his letter to the Romans comes. He now feels that his missionary labors in this general territory are complete. In Rom. 15:19 he writes: "From Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum I have fully

preached the gospel of Christ." Henceforth he is to seek a new field of labor. He goes on to say that it has never been his plan to carry on missionary work in territory where others have preceded him. He is looking for virgin soil. It is his intention to visit Rome in the near future and he hopes his visit may prove a blessing to the Roman church. But his stay there is to be only a transient one, for his purpose is to go on to Spain. But before setting out for the West, he is to pay a visit to Jerusalem. These hopes and plans he describes in Rom. 15:22-33. Paul seems to have been already at Cenchreae, the seaport of Corinth, on his way to go up to Jerusalem when he sent forward his letter to the Romans (Rom. 16:1).

Paul's plans were thwarted by misfortune that overtook him on his visit to Jerusalem. There he was arrested, his trial was delayed, and for about two years he remained a prisoner at Caesarea. Ultimately he reached Rome, but in chains. The Book of Acts closes with the statement that for two whole years Paul was held a prisoner in Rome, although privileged to live in his own hired dwelling and to preach his gospel to all who cared to come to hear him. What happened to him afterwards is not positively known. Whether he ever carried out his former plan of going on to Spain is very doubtful. Some think that he was released at the end of the first imprisonment after which he made another visit to the East, and later found himself once more in Rome, again a prisoner. That he was executed there, either at the close of a first or a second imprisonment, seems highly probable. Philippians 1:12-30 implies that he is in sore straits, but yet hopes for a release, but II Tim. 4:6-8 was written when death was staring Paul in the face.

II. PAUL'S RELATIONS WITH THE ROMAN CHURCH

Apparently the Roman Christians had never felt any too cordial toward this Christian prisoner from the East. Perhaps if he had come as a free man, he would have received a heartier reception. But Paul had, quite contrary to his own wishes, no doubt, gained a rather unenviable reputation as a trouble maker. His zeal in missionary preaching had caused a riot among the Jews in almost every community where he had worked. Such disturbances were heartily frowned upon by the Roman government. Probably the Christians in Rome stood in none too high favor with the police authorities in the city. Also there were many Jews in Rome and they would not be slow to inform the authorities against the Christians. While a Paul in chains might be a heroic figure in the eyes of his old friends, probably to many Roman Christians he seemed a stumbling-block and a menace to the peace of the new religion in the capital of the Empire. For this reason, if for no other, they might easily look upon him as an undesirable visitor.

Then there are, even in the letter which he has previously written to the Roman church, not a few intimations that he himself was already aware of the existence of unfriendly feelings toward him on the part of many of the Romans. Apparently some persons had explained his failure to visit the city at an earlier date as cow-

ardice on his part. They implied that he was aware of his inferiority, and consequently had not appeared as a missionary in the capital of the Empire. In Rom. 1:8-16, Paul seems to have some such accusation in mind and hence takes pains in the very opening of his epistle to declare his keen interest in the welfare of the Roman church, to affirm his readiness to preach the gospel there when the opportunity offers, and emphatically to announce that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ under any circumstances, for everywhere it is the power of God unto salvation.

This air of self-defense on Paul's part crops out at various places in his letter. Even though he emphatically expresses his good will toward the Roman Christians, it is perfectly apparent that he has no little fault to find with them and their way of pursuing the Christian life. On more than one occasion he implies that he has something to give them which they do not already possess, something that is higher and better. See for example, Rom. 1:11 or 2:16, where the possessive pronoun is not without significance in Paul's statement that God shall judge the secrets of men according to *my* gospel, or again in 15:24, it is clear that Paul will be glad of help from the Roman church in his further enterprise to carry the gospel to Spain, but he will not be satisfied to pass on until he has brought the Roman Christians more directly in the line with his ideals.

III. THE PERSONNEL OF THE ROMAN CHURCH

When and how the Roman church first arose we do not know. An ancient tradition makes Peter its founder. But there is no sufficient historical basis for this statement. That it was already a large and important Christian community when Paul wrote his letter to the church is perfectly apparent. Paul's statement in chapter 1:8 to the effect that the faith of the Roman church was proclaimed throughout the whole world, while highly complimentary, undoubtedly has a substantial basis in fact. Already in Paul's day this community was one of the largest and best known throughout Christendom. It is quite likely that the Jew, Aquila, and his wife, Priscilla, with whom Paul made his home in Corinth, according to Acts 18:1-4, were already Christians before they left Rome, about the year 50 A.D. They are representative of those artisans and tradespeople who spread Christianity over the Roman world, particularly in the principal centers of population and commerce. In some such manner, Christianity early found its way into the capital of the Empire.

There are indications that the Christian group in Rome has in its membership converted Jews, although they seem to be in the minority. There is, however, a very strong disposition even among the Gentile Christians of Rome to esteem the Jewish law more highly than Paul thought proper. Whether or not the Jewish element dominated in membership, certainly Jewish inheritances were given a most prominent place in the life of the church. Paul can take for granted that he is

writing to people who are thoroughly familiar with the law and who revere it to a degree which in Paul's opinion threatens the supremacy of Christ and prevents the fullest realization of an ideal spiritual life. This side of the character of the Roman church is set in rather sharp relief by such a passage as *Röm. 2:27-29*.

But the dominant element in the membership of the Roman church is unquestionably Gentile. In fact, Paul seems to complain that the Roman Christians have gone quite too far in giving up any expectation of further success for the Christian missionary enterprise among Jews. In chapters 10 and 11 he dwells upon this point at considerable length. He feels it necessary to remind his readers that there is no distinction between Jew and Greek in the sight of God and that the new Christian salvation is designed for both alike. See, for example, 10:12, 13. Or again in emphatic language, he accuses the Roman Christians of being wise in their own conceit when they imagine that God has cast Israel off permanently and taken Gentiles into favor to the exclusion of Jews. The failure of Israel to accept Christ is said to be only a temporary status of affairs in order to drive the Christian missionaries to preach to Gentiles. Paul elaborates this point in chapter 11:11-32.

Again in the opening chapter of the letter, where Paul talks about the Gentiles and their immoral heathen heritages, it is clear that he thinks of himself as speaking to an audience whose antecedents certainly are not Jewish. People who had grown up in Jerusalem under the rigorous moral training of the synagogue would hardly have been liable to the temptations and the debasements which Paul so vividly depicts in chapter 1:18-32. Moreover the elementary character of the moral instruction which he sets forth in the 12th and 13th chapters applies much more fittingly to a group of converts whose antecedents lay in the world of paganism than to converted Jews previously disciplined by a life lived under the regulations of the Mosaic law.

IV. THE ROMANS' NOTION OF THE "WAY"

The members of the Roman church had their own distinctive notions of the proper way to live the Christian life. With them Paul does not altogether agree. From some source to us unknown, he had learned a good deal regarding the character and activities of the Christian community at Rome. Scattered references in his letter give us a faint idea of the particular form which Christianity had taken in this prominent church. One may gather some idea of its character by reading such passages as *Röm. 2:26-29*; *3:19-30*; *6:15-23*; *7:1-6*; *8:12-17*.

One problem at issue is how Christians should rely upon the Old Testament law as the way to the true Christian life. The Romans had adopted a legalistic type of Christianity which seeks a guidance for conduct in rules written down in Scripture. They trust less to immediate experience under the guidance of the spirit, than they do to a body of scriptural instruction. In their loyalty to the law they have gone even to the extreme of taking the requirement of circumcision literally, or at least some of them have so done. Although they were Gentiles previous to

their conversion to Christianity, they have taken the Old Testament so literally and have made it so thoroughly their own that Paul can call them "men who know the law" (7:1). Paul's stress on faith as delivering one from the obligation to keep the law and his assertion that the Holy Spirit was the supreme and ultimate guide for the direction of a Christian life did not satisfy the Roman Christians. They prized more highly a less emotional type of assurance derived from the record of an ancient book. They sought a more sober type of conduct, divinely ordered as they believed by an ancient revelation. When they wanted to know what to do they consulted the scripture, while Paul at a critical moment followed the lead of the Spirit.

In still another respect Paul would correct the view of the Romans. This may be perceived by reading the following passages: Rom. 9:1-5; 30-33; 10:2, 3; 11:1-32. The point at issue here is whether God has finally cast off the Jews and thus rendered further missionary labors among them entirely futile. The Roman Christians have appropriated to themselves the whole body of Jewish scripture, maintaining that it is now the proper possession of Christianity. Doubtless they were saying that God had cast off his once chosen people; by rejecting Christ they had forfeited their right to their sacred literature. This attitude meant no doubt that the Christians in Rome were definitely endeavoring to differentiate between themselves and Jews and thus sought to avoid that attitude of popular disfavor which the Jews so frequently incurred in that environment. Only a few years before Paul wrote this letter, the Emperor Claudius had issued an edict expelling the Jews from Rome. But of course the edict had not been put into effect in drastic fashion. There was, however, no small measure of popular sentiment against the Jews which the Christians themselves were liable to incur so long as they were thought by people generally to be a Jewish sect.

The Roman Christians were evidently anti-Jewish in their feeling, and prolegal in their thought of the correct method of procedure for realizing the highest type of Christian life. They aimed to teach the scriptures and to constitute themselves into a new exclusive society. For them, salvation was not simply a great experience, but a program of conduct. Perhaps, indeed, it was both, with the greater emphasis, however, upon actions in observing the scriptural direction which God had originally delivered to the Jews, but which through the Jews' rejection of Christ had become the exclusive property of the new Christian society.

V. PAUL'S CORRECTIVE PROGRAM: THE NEED OF A GREATER SALVATION

In his endeavor to correct the program of the Romans, Paul lays emphasis first upon the need of a greater assurance of salvation than any legalistic program can furnish. Read chapter 1, verses 18-32. In their natural state, the Gentiles are objects of the divine wrath, even though by nature they do some good things and

have in their minds a spark of the divine guidance which constitutes a law for them, yet on the whole they are in a helpless and hopeless condition, until they turn to Christ in faith. Next he takes up the state of the Jews under the law, dwelling upon this theme at greater length. Read chapters 2 and 3. Notwithstanding the great value of the law as an education toward righteous ideals, it alone has been insufficient. It alone has made the Jews more conscious than the Gentiles are of the impending judgments of God, but it has not shown them an adequate way of escape. Jews and Gentiles alike rest under the divine condemnation while they seek righteousness merely through the keeping of the law.

True righteousness is attainable only through faith in Jesus Christ. Read particularly chapter 3:21-30. But immediately there arises an embarrassing question. Would Paul have the Romans throw the scriptures out of the church? To use his own phrasing, "Do we then make the law of none effect through faith?" (3:31). Throughout chapter 4 Paul deals with this problem. He seeks to show that faith is no new thing, but has itself a scriptural support which antedates even the law. As Abraham came before Moses, so faith came before law. And the ground upon which Abraham stood justified in the sight of God was his trust in God rather than any series of good works that he had performed. To be sure, it was with Abraham that God had made the Covenant of Circumcision, but this was a sign of God's approval of Abraham's faith, not a means by which Abraham was to secure a new and higher righteousness in the esteem of God.

Rom. 5 is one of the most memorable passages in all of Paul's letters. It is one of his most emphatic presentations of his characteristic doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ. Christian assurance rests not upon the consciousness of having kept some letter of scripture, but is a joyous religious experience. Even though tribulation may follow in the course of attempting to live the Christian life, one experiences continually the support of the Holy Spirit. It matters not how great a sinner one may have been, this salvation is all complete. The love of God even for the most wicked of men has been demonstrated through the self-sacrificing death of Christ. The curse of mankind's sin inherited from Adam has now been removed. Salvation is a free gift of God. This privilege is to be realized through faith. God had introduced the law into human experience, not for the purpose of providing a way of redemption, but only as a preparatory measure for making men more conscious of their sinfulness and thus preparing them to welcome more heartily the revelation of God's grace in Christ.

Paul's enthusiastic praise of God's grace leads to another question. Read chapter 6. If God's grace is so all-abounding, and so completely effective even for the vilest of sinners, may not one throw aside completely all thought of strenuous living, according to moral law? Indeed, it might be said that the more one sins, the greater will be the opportunity for God to display his grace. A Roman Christian might say that Paul's exaltation of grace encourages one to live a lawless type of life. This

question leads Paul out into a long discussion of what he understands to be true Christian sanctification. One should stop here and read through to the end of chapter 8. We shall follow Paul's exposition point by point.

There is the sharpest kind of contrast between the status of persons before they become Christians and afterward. Prior to baptism, they had all been sinners, but on entering the Christian society they have all died to sin, because they have become united to the holy Christ. They must now live righteously, because he lives in them. To live under law would imply that they still were struggling with sinful impulses, but now they are under grace and sin no longer has dominion. In fact, the Christian is no longer disposed to sin. Through faith in Christ he has won the victory over all sinful impulse, or at least has learned now the sure way of resisting such impulses as may still survive in his mortal flesh. The sure way to resist temptation lies in the direction of a larger and larger dependence upon the grace of God and a more complete realization of his redemption accomplished through faith in Christ. Not by doing the works of the law, but by living a more genuinely spiritual life will the Christian find his surest method of deliverance from temptation.

This line of argument is pursued further in chapter 7 where Paul makes that memorable revelation of his own inner conflict with evil. Read with particular care verses 7-25. Paul has condemned legalism as an ideal but he would not have his readers understand that he thinks the Mosaic law inherently bad. On the contrary, it is indeed thoroughly good, if used for the purpose for which it was intended. It is valueless as a means of ultimately securing righteousness but very effective in producing a consciousness of imperfection. Under the law Paul found only agony because it told him what he should not do, while at the same time in his unregenerate state the prohibitions of the law were the things that he most desired to do. At the very moment when he was most loyally pursuing the way of the law, he was most fully conscious of his inability to attain perfection.

Under grace alone does Paul's spirit find peace. Chapter 8:1-11 expresses the very quintessence of the Christian way as Paul would expound it to the Romans. Do they want a law? Then let them follow the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes one free from the old law of sin and death. Do they want relief from the anxiety of the perpetual struggle to keep specific mandates of God in order that they may find favor in his sight? Then let them have the mind of the spirit which is life and peace. Indeed, without this attainment they are not in reality Christians. For if any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. On the other hand, if he truly has the spirit of Christ, sinful impulses are helpless to turn him aside from the proper way. Obedience to the will of God is not a matter of bookkeeping. It is an adventure in living. But triumph is certain for one who is guided by the spirit.

Chapter 8:18-39 has a forward look. Life in the spirit insures one's future. Redemption through faith in Christ is not merely a present or partial affair, it is

complete and external. The Christian way is one of suffering in the present. That is to be expected, for one may still have moral struggles within and may suffer calamities from external circumstances. But these embarrassments sink into comparative insignificance as Paul compares the brief present conflict with the glory of the eternal reward. Again, it is the presence of the spirit sympathetically sharing the conflict of human life that supplies one's strength for victory. That means, that God is for us and no greater power can be against us. The favor which he manifested in giving his own son to die on behalf of men, is a guaranty that he will not leave the work of final redemption and reward incomplete. Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

VI. PAUL AND THE JEWISH QUESTION AT ROME

The second area of thinking in which the Romans need to be corrected, as Paul sees their attitude, concerns their thought of the Jews. Are the Romans right in assuming that the Jewish element in the population of the Roman world at this time have no prospect of sharing in the blessing of the Christian hope? Read Rom. 9:1-5, where Paul reveals the agony of his spirit, when reflecting upon the fact that as yet the Jews have not turned in faith to Christ. Paul, like the Roman Christians, believes that God, from the very foundation of the world, had in mind the establishment of that type of religion which Christianity now represents. The preparation had been made in Judaism. Had God made a mistake in choosing this people as his own, and were they not finally to share in his plan for the consummation of humanity's salvation?

Paul himself was a Jew, and prized his ancestral heritage very highly. He could not feel sympathetic with the Roman attitude of indifference and rejection of the Jews from the new religion. Chapter 9:6-18 represents Paul's attempt to show that the temporary rejection of Christianity by the Jews does not necessarily mean a denial of God's promises earlier made to Israel. God had not promised and then broken his promise as an unrighteous man would, but one must not deny to God freedom to act according to his own will. He has a larger end in view than perhaps men had previously understood. In verses 19-23 of chapter 9, Paul labors to show that God may still be trusted to deal generously with his chosen people. Nor is their present rejection of God's will an entirely unique phenomenon in their history. On earlier occasions they have deviated temporarily from the divine purposes.

In chapter 10 Paul utters another outburst of personal feeling with respect to his hope for Israel's salvation. He admires their zeal for God, but regrets that they do not know the way of grace, which has more recently been revealed in Christ. He reminds the Romans that salvation is quite as free for the Jew as for the Gentile. Throughout chapter 10 he dwells with great emphasis upon this fact. In God's sight there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. There is the same Lord over both, and his loving kindness abounds alike to the Jew and the Gentile. If the

Romans are neglecting the evangelization of the Jews, they are making a grave mistake, because only by the preaching of Christ can the Jews be turned to Christianity. This is the point stressed in Rom. 10:14, 15. Nor should the missionary be discouraged by the fact that Jews have not already responded. They should be given another chance for God has always been long-suffering with their tardiness.

In chapter 11 Paul comes out boldly with an affirmation of his conviction that there is still hope for Israel. Read first verses 1-10. Paul's feeling of unity with his own race will not permit him to entertain the attitude of the Romans. He himself was of the seed of Abraham and of the tribe of Benjamin and his God had been their God and was still the God of his brethren. God's choice had not been a temporary one. Back of it lay eternal purposes. All through the history of the Israelites this eternal purpose of the Divine had found ways of transcending their disobedience. Some similar way would now be found. So Paul passes on in the remainder of the chapter to set forth his particular view of the relation between Christians and Jews in the future.

Paul proposes the theory that the Jews' rejection of Christ has been brought in order that the Gentiles may have an opportunity to receive the gospel. Apparently he thinks that had the Jews immediately received the Christian preachers' methods, that God's plan might have been brought to consummation without giving any attention to the situation of the Gentile world. As it is, the consummation has been delayed and missionaries are now laboring outside of Palestine. But just in proportion as this temporary loss of blessing to the Jews has meant the enrichment of life for the Gentiles, by so much the more will a fulness of blessing ultimately be enjoyed by the Jews when the Gentile mission is finished and the Jews finally come into the church. Paul reminds the Romans that these Jews whom they are despising are only temporarily enemies of God and that in fact for the sake of the Gentiles themselves, in order that they may have an opportunity to receive Christianity. In the end, however, the Jews will constitute the main trunk of the Christian tree and it will be recognized that Gentiles are only engrafted branches. Paul puts his conviction tersely in a single sentence in verse 32: "For God hath set up all unto disobedience that he might have mercy upon all."

VII. MORAL PRECEPTS

While Christians live by grace, they nevertheless must entertain high moral ideals and strive most diligently to realize them in practice. This is an aspect of the Pauline Christian way that is prominent in all of his letters. Nor is it missing in his letter to the Romans. Chapter 12 expounds the new law of Christian love. Paul pleads for thorough consecration to God, for genuine humility on the part of Christians in relation to one another and for that sincerity which will be purged completely of all hypocrisy. Verses 9-21 of this chapter are worthy to be placed side by side with the memorable thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians.

In chapter 13 Paul takes up questions of a more social sort. Christians are to seek not alone to cultivate personal virtue, but are to be exemplary individuals in their social relationships. They are to obey the government in so far as this temporal authority does not demand disobedience to God. They must discharge their obligations of debt to their fellow-men and exercise unlimited love toward their neighbor. The requirements of the decalogue are still valid, even though the law of circumcision may have been set aside. But in their relations with the non-Christian environment, they are always to remember that it is a temporal and rapidly passing order. They belong to a kingdom of life and the day is at hand when the present evil age will be destroyed and the kingdom of God inaugurated.

Paul deals more extensively with the problems of life in a Christian community. First in chapter 14 he gives advice regarding the proper way in which to treat the weak brother. One should not be too severe in judgment and there should be a considerable measure of elasticity of opinion with reference to the relative merits of different views among Christians. In fact, Paul would eliminate entirely all judgment of one another from the Christian group, his sole ideal being that no one should place a stumbling-block in his brother's way. The controlling ideal should be peace and edification. Throughout chapter 15 he pursues the same theme. The strong must bear the infirmities of the weak and all should exercise a Christlike spirit of kindness toward one another.

VIII. PERSONAL MATTERS

As in most of Paul's letters he closes his communication with purely personal matters. From the 14th verse of chapter 15 on to the end the Epistle to the Romans is of this same nature. He wants the Christians in Rome to receive him when he comes and to be in a state of mind by which they may derive a spiritual blessing from his visit. He also wants them to be favorably disposed toward his project to visit Spain. One easily perceives from the language he uses that he is not at all sure that either of these requests will be granted, but he hopes for the best.

Whether chapter 16 belongs to the original letter of Paul to the Romans is not certain. Many scholars think that it may have been a short note addressed to some other church as a letter of recommendation for Phoebe, or possibly to some individual. It was not uncommon in ancient times to copy on the papyrus roll more than one document when space permitted. Moreover, if Paul had in Rome as many friends as are listed in chapter 16:3-16 it is difficult to understand why he should have felt so anxious about his prospective visit to the city. Then we know also that later in life when he was a prisoner in the capitol, his friends were few. Read Philipians, chapter 4:10-19. He would have been in sore straits had not his friends in the East sent him help. Read again II Timothy, chapter 4:9-18 where Paul again has turned his eyes to the East, seeking the ministration of sympathetic friends.

But these problems are of minor importance. Far above them in significance stands this genuine letter of Paul, revealing to us one of the most crucial stages in the history of Christianity as it passed out into the Roman world at large. Was it to cease to be that spontaneous religion of the spirit which Paul had represented? Was the Christian way of life to sink down to the low level of a new legalism? This was the great issue at stake.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. At what point in his missionary career did Paul write his letter to the Romans?
2. What had been Paul's policy as to preaching Christianity where others had preceded him and what was his intention concerning his Roman visit?
3. How did he ultimately come to Rome and how long was he there?
4. What were the attitudes of the Roman Christians toward Paul?
5. Tell what you can about the origin and constitution of the Christian group in Rome.
6. What light do we gain from Paul's letter to the Romans as to the characteristics of the Christianity which they practiced?
7. What was the attitude of the Roman Christians toward the Jews?
8. With what theory of the attainment of righteousness did Paul seek to modify the legalistic tendencies of the Roman Christians?
9. Discuss Paul's presentation of the contrasting elements of law and grace.
10. What does he mean by life in the spirit?
11. What was the assumption of the Romans concerning the share of the Jews in the Christian hope?
12. How does Paul feel about the salvation of Israel?
13. Give the characteristics of the new law of Christian love which Paul expounds to the Romans.
14. To what ideals of social and civic relationships according to Paul should Christians attain?
15. What does he think regarding the responsibility of the stronger for the weaker Christians?
16. What essentially was the crisis which Christianity faced among the Romans?
17. Do you see any analogies between the struggles of Christianity in these early days and the controversies of our own day?

STUDY VII

THE CHRISTIAN WAY IN THE SECOND GENERATION

By SHIRLEY J. CASE

I. THE PASSING OF THE FIRST GENERATION

Jesus was crucified in the year 29 or 30. A few of his personal friends who had been associated with him during the brief period of his public ministry were presently joined by a few of their fellow-Jews who constituted themselves into a new group of his admirers which we commonly call the early Christian church in Palestine. These people were of Jesus' own generation. They were able to recall for guidance in their own religious living words which they had heard him speak and acts of his own life which they had personally witnessed. The prominent individuals in this group were Peter, James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, James, the brother of Jesus, and Barnabas.

Read Acts 6:1-6. Side by side with the primitive Christian group there early arose another company of believers in Jesus, called Grecian Jews, or, more properly, Hellenists. One of the outstanding differences between the two groups was linguistic. Jesus and his personal companions had used the Aramaic speech, at that time the language of daily life among the Jews of Palestine. But in the city of Jerusalem there were some Jews, perhaps indeed many, who could not speak Aramaic because they had been born and had grown to manhood in some Greek city like Alexandria or Ephesus. When they came back to Jerusalem in later life, as frequently happened, they constituted a distinct element in the population by virtue of the fact that they knew only the Greek speech.

At an early date in the history of the Christian movement it attracted to itself certain Greek-speaking Jews. They, too, belonged to the first generation. Some of them may have remained in Palestine, but most of them were scattered abroad by the persecution conducted by Paul. They went up to Damascus and established a new religion in that city. Others went down to Antioch in Syria, where later Paul and Barnabas labored with them to build up a comparatively strong church in that city. In the case of the first generation of these Greek-speaking Christians they also could draw upon direct memories of the life and teaching of Jesus. No one of their company had been a personal disciple of him, but they were able to obtain information about his career directly from persons who had been in the company of his disciples. This tradition, to be sure, had to be translated from Aramaic into Greek, but there were many Jews in these days who knew both the languages.

Among the prominent leaders of Hellenistic Christianity in the first generation the most conspicuous figure is Paul. In fact, he towers so far above all the rest that even their names are almost unknown. Yet he did have important helpers whose assistance he greatly appreciated. Among others, he mentions particularly Silas, Titus, Timothy, John Mark, and Luke, the beloved physician. But he had a host of other friends. Read, for example, Rom. 16:3-16. In later life, however, when he was lying in prison at Rome, awaiting impending execution, he longed for companionship which he was now denied. Read his pathetic words in II Tim. 4:9-18. Doubtless many of his old friends had passed away, and of his younger contemporaries who were still alive many were engaged in new activities, directing the Christian movement on to a new stage in its history. The leaders of the first generation were rapidly passing off the scene. James, the son of Zebedee, had been put to death by Herod Agrippa soon after the year 40. Early in the sixties James, the brother of Jesus, had met a like fate and, according to one tradition of the church, John, the son of Zebedee, suffered martyrdom at about this same time. In this same decade both Paul and Peter met their death. The Jewish revolt of the year 66-70 had driven the Christian movement out of Jerusalem, and thus virtually brought to an end the importance of Palestinian Christianity. Henceforth the future of the movement lay with the missionary enterprise on gentile soil.

II. PROBLEMS FOR THE SECOND GENERATION

The second generation of Christian leaders was confronted by many new and serious tasks. The death of the original leaders and the fall of Jerusalem, which meant practically the obliteration of the original Jerusalem church, removed those outstanding authoritative guides to which appeal had formerly been made. Apostles could no longer be consulted for direct information about the way of life that Jesus had taught and had himself exemplified. When perplexed by a new problem Christian leaders could no longer go, as Paul and Barnabas had done, in the late forties, to consult the church at Jerusalem and obtain from the pillars there a statement of correct procedure. The second generation was thrown upon its own resources, gathering up as best it could from the past such helps for guidance as still survived.

Then again it was faced by the task of making the Christian movement a success in the gentile world alone. By the year 70 the breach between the Christians and the Jews had come to be so wide that the hope of ever winning any large group of converts from among Jesus' fellow-countrymen had been pretty generally abandoned, and the weakening of the Christian movement at Palestine as a result of the Jewish revolution, followed by the destruction of Jerusalem, only gave additional emphasis to the conviction that if Christianity were to establish itself in the world it must depend very largely for its support on converts won from among the gentiles. Jesus' way of living had now to be translated not simply from the Aramaic language of Jesus' countrymen into the Greek speech of the gentile world, but it had

to be made attractive to peoples whose tastes and interests deviated widely from those characteristic of the original Jewish environment in which Jesus had lived and taught.

The change in geographical conditions meant a corresponding change in the make-up of the membership of the Christian churches. In earlier times Christians were people who had received their previous religious training within Judaism. Its devotion to the one God of the Old Testament and the vigorous moral training which Judaism inculcated were a natural possession of the first Christian communities. In gentile lands, when the first Christian groups were composed of Hellenistic Jews, a similar situation prevailed, but when the break with Judaism became complete the Christian societies were recruited by converts from heathenism. These new members brought with them a very different type of religious heritage. The problem of teaching them the Christian way of life and building up in them a habitual procedure in conformity with this ideal became a crucial problem for Christian leaders.

Under the influence of new conditions even the ideal of the Christian life was liable to change. Gentile converts soon assumed a rôle of leadership themselves. They brought their own distinctive cultural heritages into the new religion, thus raising the problem of how far it might be transformed from its original Jewish character into a movement that would be more closely in harmony with the genius of gentile cultural interests. Jewish ways of thought must be made to give way to characteristic phases of gentile thinking if Christianity is to make a successful appeal to its new environment. The tasks confronting the leaders of the second generation were many and complicated, but all difficulties were so successfully solved that during this period the new religion was carried well along toward successful establishment in the Mediterranean world at large.

III. THE NEW BOOKS ABOUT JESUS

The Jewish scriptures were the Bible of the Christians of the first generation. There were as yet no distinctively Christian writings. The Epistles of Paul, written between the years 50 and 65, mark the beginnings of a Christian literature. And these books were written because Paul was unable to make personal visits to the churches to which he addressed the letters. He would have much preferred to go in person, but circumstances would not permit. We have to thank these hindering conditions for the existence in our Bible of these much-prized letters of Paul.

Similarly, the story of the life and teaching of Jesus did not immediately receive form. No documents were necessary when it was possible for a Peter, a James, or a John, or some other Christian preacher who had been personally associated with these disciples of Jesus to tell off hand what Jesus had said or done on one or another occasion. Christians of the first generation could have the guidance of Jesus given to them by word of mouth. They needed no gospel. Thus it transpired that

no continuous biography of Jesus was produced among the Christians of Palestine. Nor was any such work written for Gentiles until some forty years after Jesus had died. On the contrary, reports of his deeds and words were passed about orally by the traveling Christian missionaries. They were more concerned with specific instances or particular words that would drive home with their hearers the message of the moment. A complete and systematically arranged biography was not required for their purpose.

To understand the conditions which gave rise to the gospel as a book about Jesus one should read very carefully Luke 1:1-4. Here one finds a long story told in a very few words. In the early Christian preaching the ideals of Jesus had been passed on by word of mouth from one congregation to another. Sometimes a Christian preacher might have left behind a brief account of some parables of Jesus, or a story of some of his miracles, or an epitome of his teaching about the Kingdom of God. But these narratives had at first been altogether fragmentary in character, and the writer of Luke had found them quite unsatisfactory for his purpose. He himself, never having been a companion of Jesus, was unable to speak at first hand. Hence it was necessary that he should gather together even the most fragmentary bits of information, piecing them into one whole as best he could. He wishes to convince his "most excellent Theophilus" that the Christian had a genuinely divine foundation, certified to by the work and teaching of Jesus. If he could have given Theophilus first-hand information about Jesus it would have been quite unnecessary for him to gather up earlier sources. But since that could not be done he must adopt the more tedious mode of procedure.

A written gospel probably was felt to be a poor substitute for the direct testimony of the personal disciple who had lived through the actual scenes of Jesus' life-time. But the lapse of time had removed such persons from the stage. Christians of the second generation were forced to rely upon this more second-hand type of guidance. Even before the gospel of Luke was written, the book we now call the Gospel of Mark had come into existence. By comparing it with Luke we discover that it was one of the sources used extensively by the author of Luke. John Mark, so early Christian tradition reports, had written his book to preserve the memory of things which Peter had been accustomed to narrate in his missionary preaching. But it was not until Peter had died that any necessity had been felt for such a book. Peter met his fate sometime in the sixties, in all probability, and the Gospel of Mark was written about the year 70.

The author of the first gospel in our New Testament collection has given us no introductory paragraph, such as stands in Luke, to tell of the way in which materials had been gathered. But if we read the first three gospels side by side we very readily discover some interesting facts. If one has such a book as Burton and Goodspeed, *A Harmony of the Synoptic Gospels*, these facts about the rise of the gospels may be easily discovered. But one who has only a copy of the New Testament may

find them for himself by a little investigation. Read, for example, side by side, Mark 1: 16-20 and Matt. 4: 18-22. Here, it will be observed, are two almost verbally identical accounts of the same incident. Page after page of Mark and Matthew thus agree.

Again, there are many paragraphs in which Matthew and Luke thus agree, but which are found nowhere in Mark. Read, for example, side by side, Matt. 3: 7-10 and Luke 3: 7-9. One who has the time to follow up this line of study will be interested to read further. See, for example, Matt. 5: 1-12 and Luke 6: 20-26; Matt. 5: 39-48 and Luke 6: 27-36; Matt. 6: 25-33 and Luke 12: 22-31; Matt. 7: 23-27 and Luke 6: 47-49; Matt. 24: 45-51 and Luke 12: 42-47. These paragraphs from Matthew and Luke are never found in Mark, but they are so very similar in content and language that students today have no hesitation in concluding that both writers copied them from a common source.

We now turn back to the preface to Luke's gospel, where he tells us that he used the work of many predecessors. The author of the Gospel of Matthew, we discover, used many of the same works. One of these earlier sources was our present Gospel of Mark. One or more of the other earlier documents contained tradition about Jesus' teaching, such as we find in those paragraphs previously referred to as possessed in common by Matthew and Luke. This body of material we call, for convenience, the *Logia*, meaning "sayings." Apparently there were several documents containing such sayings among the many bits of source material used by the author of Luke and by the author of Matthew. Early Christian tradition implies that this *Logia* material had been composed by the apostle Matthew, and on that account probably his name has been given to the present New Testament book. But as it now stands it is a composite work, like the Gospel of Luke. Both books were composed sometime after the year 70, that is, subsequent to the writing of Mark, by authors who gathered up the earlier fragmentary and less well-unified tradition about Jesus in order that these things might be preserved in more systematic fashion for directing the people of the second generation in Jesus' own way of life.

The Fourth Gospel, commonly believed to have been the latest of the four to be composed, offers a distinctly new type of guidance. Instead of presenting the teaching of Jesus as it stands in the Sermon on the Mount, emphasizing the way in which men are to act, it lays stress on what they are to believe. This purpose is explicitly affirmed in 20: 30-31. The author had in mind a circle of gentile readers who were accustomed to think in the terminology of Greek philosophy. Read 1: 1-18. In the very opening verse of his book he identifies Jesus with the divine Logos, a word which is translated rather inadequately in our English rendering by "Word." For the Gentile accustomed to read Greek philosophical works the Logos was the quintessence of the divine power and reason; in short, the aspect of deity that was most effectively operative in relation to the world of mankind. Henceforth this philosophical terminology becomes a part of the Christian way.

IV. JEWISH ENEMIES OF THE CHRISTIAN WAY

The hostility of Judaism to Christianity did not slacken in the least when Christianity became a gentile movement. There were, in fact, more Jews in the different cities around the Mediterranean world than resided in Palestine itself. In many of the Greek cities the earliest membership of the Christian movement had been drawn from the Jewish synagogue. The first gentile converts also were received from that group of "God-fearers," as those Gentiles were called who used to attend the services in the Jewish synagogue. Thus the conditions which brought about rivalry between Christianity and Judaism were often even more acute in a Greek center than they had been in Palestine itself. The abandonment of Jewish soil did not, therefore, relieve the Christians of the second generation from defending their cause against Jewish hostility.

Accordingly, it was quite in order for evangelists who wrote the Gospel of Mark, of Matthew, and of Luke, as well as for the author of the Fourth Gospel, to deal at length with the problem of Christianity in relation to Judaism. These writers are happy in being able to cite the example and teaching of Jesus in defense of Christians in the presence of their critics. Read, for example, Mark 2:23-28, where Jesus defends the liberal attitude of Christians toward the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, a problem that was particularly acute in a gentile environment. Read again Mark 7:1-23. Jewish Christians in Palestine had not been particularly disturbed by the requirements of the Jewish law with reference to clean and unclean meat, for example. All meats were clean in Palestine. But a Christian group in a gentile city was very differently situated. To observe meticulously the requirements of the Jewish ceremonial law was not only a difficult matter for gentile Christians, but it would bring upon them the ridicule of their non-Christian friends and acquaintances. But those who now could read the Gospel of Mark and find in it instructions about Jesus' attitude toward these questions had a fresh justification for their deviation from Judaism.

For Christians Jesus now became virtually a new Moses, who laid down the new Christian law. Some Christians were less radical than Paul had been in affirming liberty to set aside certain things in the ceremonial law of Judaism. Even Mark's position might have been somewhat too free for certain Christians of the second generation. They maintain that the whole ancient system of scriptural legislation had passed over into Christianity and had been added to, rather than supplanted by, the new law of Jesus. Read very carefully, Matt. 5:17-48. This author presents a version of Jesus' message in a form that may be conveniently compared with the legal type of teaching in Judaism. The evangelist will not allow that Jesus sets aside even the smallest item in the law. In fact, in verse 19, he seems to refer to those more liberal-minded Christians who were in the habit of neglecting some pieces of the Mosaic dispensation. He would not deny these persons a place in the Kingdom of Heaven, but he thinks their place will be small. However, he is per-

fectly clear upon the point that the requirements of Jesus go deeper than the letter of the law, and emphasize the purpose and motive behind all conduct. Whether Jesus, who thus emphasizes motive and spirit above the letter, would personally have approved the statement which the evangelist has made in verses 18 and 19, one today might seriously question.

Christian self-defense sometimes expressed itself in the form of bitter denunciation of Judaism. Perhaps the most violent example is that in which the author of Matthew brings Jesus upon the scene to denounce the Scribes and Pharisees. See Matt. 23:13-36. The Gospel of Luke is less violent in its denunciation, but no less well aware of Jewish hostility toward the new religion. Read Luke 11:42-52. The author of the Fourth Gospel also is troubled by the fact of Jewish hostility to Christianity, and in his picture of Jesus not a little attention is given to the matter of bringing out the perversity of Jesus' contemporaries. Read 2:13-25. Here we find that at the very beginning of the story of Jesus' career this gospel depicts the violent hostility between Jesus and the Jewish leaders of his day. The special interest of his gospel in Christianity as a proper religion for the Greeks is brought out prominently in 12:20-43. This evangelist believes that already in Jesus' lifetime Greeks had come to join the company of his disciples, and in discoursing upon this fact Jesus himself clearly expresses the conviction that the Jews are hopelessly perverse in their lack of faith in him.

V. GENTILE ENEMIES OF THE CHRISTIAN WAY

Gentile persecution of the Christian movement was a distinctive development of the second generation. This fact is true, particularly regarding the attitude of the government. To be sure, it is apparent even in Paul's day that individual Gentiles in a community often hated these new religionists, particularly because they called people to forsake their idolatrous ways and thus would destroy, for example, the business of image-making. But so far as the Roman officials were concerned, Paul found them a protection rather than a menace. But during the latter part of the first century this situation changed. In the year 64, at the time of the great fire in Rome, Nero, we are told, instituted the first persecution of Christians. Incidentally, he learned that these people constituted an unpopular social group in the city. He was seeking for a scapegoat upon which to lay the blame for the fire. It occurred to him that the Christians would be suitable victims. Therefore he invented the fiction that they had set the city aflame and he persecuted them accordingly. We are indebted to the Roman historian, Tacitus, for this information.

Christians were attacked again in the early nineties, when the Emperor Domitian was emperor. He was particularly susceptible to that flattery which expressed itself in the worship of the ruler, and his subjects in Asia Minor, more especially, were zealous in advocating the establishment of the imperial cult. This was the

occasion that brought Christians into the embarrassing situation reflected in the Book of Revelation. It was of the essence of emperor worship that his subjects should greet him as lord and god. This Christians persistently refused to do, even though their actions might cause them to be condemned to death as traitors to the government. The writer of the Book of Revelation was at the time in the island of Patmos, either in voluntary or compulsory exile for his loyalty to the Christian faith (Rev. 1:9).

A most vivid picture of the danger anticipated by the author of Revelation may be had by reading chapter xiii. Here, in figurative fashion, the danger to Christianity is portrayed in terms of the activity of two beasts. The first beast is an emperor who is expected to push the requirements for worship of himself to the very limit of demanding it from all his subjects. This will mean great slaughter for the Christians. The second beast is a kind of vicegerent of the first, that is, he is the priest of the imperial cult. And it is his business to put into effect these demands of the emperor. The author writes at a time when the imperial cult is just beginning its aggressions upon Christianity. He looks forward to a day in the near future when these aggressions will become still more troublesome. But this preview also includes a further scene, when the emperor and his priest will be completely overthrown by the triumphant Christ of Christendom.

Other Christian writers of the time are less violently alarmed, but realize none the less surely the danger which threatens them from the authorities of the state. They admonish Christians to be very careful in their conduct so that they may not be accused of breaking any law. Read I Peter 4:12-19. Although this letter is written in the name of Peter, because it expresses what the author believes this apostle would have said had he lived in the present situation, the actual circumstances which it reflects are those of the late first century. Just as gospel writers, composing books to meet situations in the latter part of the first century, cited words of Jesus that might fittingly be used for guidance in those critical situations, so other Christian authors met similar crises by writing books in which Peter, James, Paul, and other Christian worthies of an earlier day delivered their message to a later generation.

Again, in a book of unknown authorship called the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find Christians subjected to a mild form of persecution. Read 12:1-13. No one of the Christian group addressed has yet suffered death for his religion, but certainly many obstacles in the way of the new faith have been encountered. The author would have his readers look upon these things as God's discipline to make them better Christians. Previously he has portrayed a long list of ancient worthies who have suffered for righteousness. They should be examples for Christians to follow. After all, present affliction is only an assurance of greater rewards in the time to come. They who persist in following the Christian way without deviation, even in the hour of severest persecution, may be assured of receiving ultimately a suitable reward.

VI. THE ORGANIZED CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

Confronted by opposition and recognizing the larger opportunity to make conquest of the gentile world, the Christian movement gradually consolidated itself into a well-organized society. During the first generation the organization had been of the looser sort. Read chapters 12-14 of I Corinthians for a picture of the informal character of the Christian society in Corinth. There were no formal officials in charge. Anyone who felt the inspiration to do so might speak or break into song. Even the observance of the Lord's Supper was liable to irregularities. A movement so simple in its organization as Christianity was in those days could hardly hope to compete with success for a substantial and permanent place in the life of the Mediterranean world at large.

The Christians of the second generation gave themselves with diligence to the task of building up around the Christian way of life a suitable organization for protecting and perpetuating their interests. Apostolic leadership of Christianity was no longer possible. The "pillars" had been removed by death, local leaders were now selected who are given the name "overseers," a title which we now commonly render by the word "bishop." They were assisted by deacons, who constituted a kind of assistant clergy. Read I Timothy 3:1-10. This letter purports to have been written by Paul to Timothy, and doubtless it does contain a portion of such correspondence. But as it now stands certainly it has been elaborated for the benefit of later readers. Timothy was a well-tried companion of Paul, who himself needed no such elementary instruction as is included in this book. But the younger generation of Christian leaders certainly needed this type of message, a model of correspondence between Paul and his young helper, Timothy, was just the proper form for this book of instruction, if it were to receive a suitable hearing.

The content of Christian teaching also needed to be protected. As gentile converts came in, in larger number they brought with them new interests and new ideas in accordance with which they began to recast the traditional Christian teaching. This produced a situation which the older Christian leaders looked upon with alarm. They denounced these adventurers as "false teachers." Read Matt. 7:15-23; the evangelist is able to bring forth words of Jesus himself that will warn Christians against giving heed to the novelties that are being introduced at the time that this gospel is written. See further such references as Hebrews 13:9, I Peter 2:16, James 3:13 f., and the short letter called the Epistle of Jude.

To offset wrong teaching it is necessary that the officers of the church shall be particularly careful to equip themselves with the proper message. Read I Timothy 1:3-11, where the young bishop is advised to be very careful in avoiding an "improper doctrine." Evidently there has been a disposition to enter into disputation and to introduce various interpretations on the basis of, perhaps, Old Testament texts or contemporary gentile philosophies. Under these circumstances the Christian leaders might be induced to swerve out of the straight path into the improprie-

ty of "vain talking." His primary business, on the other hand, is to pass on the proper Christian tradition as he has received it from his predecessors, and give great diligence to building up a strong institution.

Practical guidance for Christian living is now emphasized in great detail. Appropriate forms of conduct for different persons in the Christian society are carefully specified. Read such a passage as I Tim. 2:8-15. The bishop is to be the guide who will provide the community with proper criteria in regard to suitable conduct. He and his parishioners alike are to maintain the supremacy of the ideal moral life. See II Tim. 2:14-26.

As Christians of the second generation build up a new Christian law surrounded by the protecting wall of a firmer Christian organization they lose something of the spontaneity that had been characteristic of earlier days. At the same time they must be credited with due sincerity and not a little keen foresight. They interpreted well the demands of the contemporary situation. If the new cause was to meet effectively the circumstances by which it was now enveloped it must crystallize and solidify into a more permanent and effective society.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name some of the great personalities of the first Christian century.
2. What special advantage had they over all later Christians?
3. What became of these great leaders, and how did Palestine lose its supremacy in the Christian body?
4. What problem concerning the spread of the "Jesus way of living" did the second generation of Christians face?
5. In what way did the ancestry and cultural heritage of the new Gentile leaders affect Christianity?
6. How far was this generation able to carry Christianity geographically?
7. What Scriptures had the Christians of the first generation?
8. What were the earliest Christian writings?
9. What is the earliest gospel, and by what name was the first collection of sayings of Jesus called?
10. What essential difference is there between the emphasis of the Gospel of John and the earlier gospels?
11. What audience had the writer of John's Gospel in mind?
12. What traces of the controversy between Jews and Christians do we find in the gospels?
13. What difficulties had the followers of the Way, as a result of the establishment of emperor worship in the Roman Empire?
14. In what book of the New Testament is this conflict pictured?
15. With what spirit did the writer of this book meet the situation?

16. How does the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews deal with the persecution of the Christians?
17. What changes in organization did the Christian society undergo in the second generation?
18. How are these reflected in the letter to Timothy?
19. Point out some ways in which you think that Christianity as a prospective world-religion developed wholesomely in this period.
20. Was there any change in the teaching of Jesus, or did the changes come in the process of the adaptation of the teaching of Jesus to new conditions?
21. What books of the Bible have you read during the course so far?
22. Have these studies helped you to understand them better.
23. Is the cause of modern controversies the same as that of the early Christians, namely, the attempt to make the way of Jesus practical under new conditions?
24. Were the early Christians successful for their generation?
25. May we expect to be successful for our generation?

STUDY VIII

SOME HISTORICAL CONCEPTIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

By GERALD BIRNEY SMITH

I. THE PROBLEM OF DISCOVERING WHAT DISCIPLESHIP
TO JESUS MEANS

We have seen that the early disciples of Jesus were often in considerable perplexity as to what was involved in Christian living. When Jesus was no longer on earth it was not possible to obtain directly from him answers to new problems. His teachings had been given with reference to definite circumstances in the Jewish culture of Palestine. As Christianity spread to new lands, and as problems due to new and changing historical conditions arose, it was not always easy to determine precisely what would constitute a Christian life under the new circumstances.

In this study we shall examine some of the important conceptions of Christianity which have held sway during the nineteen centuries of Christian history. Some of these conceptions will seem to us to be substituting other principles for the spirit of Jesus. It should be remembered, however, that whenever a Christian really believes a thing to be right he is convinced that Jesus must have approved it. The authority of Jesus has thus been invoked to reinforce the standards proclaimed by many types of Christians. A survey of the ideals which have marked the history of Christianity will make it evident that we need constantly to come back to a fresh study of Jesus' way of living if we are to avoid claiming his approval for pet opinions of our own.

II. CHRISTIANITY AS AN AUTHORITATIVE CHURCH SYSTEM

Differences of opinion on important questions existed among the disciples of Jesus almost from the first. The apostle Paul asked whether circumcision was essential to a Christian life. It was commanded in the only Bible known to the first generation of Christians—the Old Testament. What about the implications of Christian love? Did it mean that Christians must be communistic, giving up all private property? Did it mean that Jews and Gentiles should eat at the same table? What did it imply as to the treatment of slaves? A host of questions grew out of the practical life of the first two centuries. Gentile Christians had to live in a world of gentile traditions and customs. Jesus, however, had spent his life in a land dominated by Jewish ideals. His teachings were addressed to those who lived under the sway of Jewish traditions. What would he expect of his followers in non-Jewish communities?

By the middle of the second century the growing chaos of opinions became intolerable. Christians were being confused by the attacks and counter-attacks of mutually hostile sects. The conviction grew that Jesus must have intended one, and only one, system of doctrine and practice. All other systems, then, were wrong because unauthorized. But how was this one authoritative system to be identified? The Catholic church gave to this question an answer which is accepted by millions of Christians today. Two or three official or officially approved statements on this point are here given.

The eternal Pastor and Bishop of our souls, in order to continue for all time the life-giving work of his Redemption, determined to build up the holy Church, wherein as in the house of the living God, all who believe might be united in the bond of one faith and one charity. . . . As then he sent the Apostles whom he had chosen to himself from the world, as he himself had been sent by the Father, so he willed that there should ever be pastors and teachers in his Church to the end of the world. And in order that the Episcopate might be one and undivided, and that by means of a closely united priesthood the multitude of the faithful might be kept secure in the oneness of the faith and communion, he set blessed Peter over the rest of the Apostles, and fixed in him the abiding principle of this twofold unity, and its visible foundation, in the strength of which the everlasting temple should arise, and the Church in the firmness of that faith should lift her majestic front to Heaven (*Dogmatic Decrees of the Vatican Council*. See Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, II, 256).

By the Church on earth, Catholics understand the visible community of believers founded by Christ, in which, by means of an enduring apostleship, established by him, and appointed to conduct all nations, in the course of ages, back to God, the works wrought by him during his earthly life, for the redemption and sanctification of mankind, are, under the guidance of his spirit, continued to the end of the world (Moehler, *Symbolism*, p. 332).

Nothing is plainer, therefore, in the Scriptures than the appointment by Jesus Christ of a divine, infallible teaching body which was to preach His entire gospel to the world. There is never a word commanding His doctrine to be written; his gospel is to be preached by the Apostles and hearkened to by the faithful, as if he himself were speaking. . . . Jesus Christ plainly tells us that his gospel should be taught until the end by a perpetual series of successors of the apostolic teaching body (Conway, *The Question Box*, p. 77).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when about to ascend from earth to heaven, left priests as his own vicars, as presidents and judges, unto whom all the mortal crimes into which the faithful of Christ may have fallen, should be carried, in order that, in accordance with the power of the keys, they may pronounce the sentence of forgiveness or retention of sins (*The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*. See Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, p. 147).

The above statements should be carefully studied in order to appreciate the conception of Christian living held by good Catholics. The following essentials should be noted:

1. It is believed that Jesus established Christianity as an official religious and moral program. He did not intrust his gospel to the free loyalty and love of individual disciples. It is held that Jesus established his church as the only authorized

institution in which one can be sure of knowing precisely what he intended his disciples to believe and to do. Cyprian, a very influential writer in the third century, said: "He cannot have God for a father who has not the Church for his mother." According to this view there can be no true Christian living unless one is in good standing in the church officially instituted by Christ.

2. It is believed that the guidance of the church is intrusted to official leaders who can trace their commission back to Jesus himself. It is held that Jesus selected and appointed the apostles, and gave them power to transmit to their officially appointed successors the right to guide the church and to teach all nations.

3. According to this view, if any Christian sincerely desires to know what Jesus requires of him he will, of course, seek instruction from the church officially authorized to give that instruction. The good Catholic expects to submit his life entirely to the church, and to obey loyally her requirements. In order to make this supervision as complete as possible, the church recommends what its members shall read, and by the exercise of censorship prevents undesirable literature from being circulated. The church supervises the education of its children. The church requires her members to come regularly to a father confessor and there to give account of their mode of living.

4. Catholic theology asserts that to the official priests of the church is committed the power to determine whether a person has satisfied the requirements of Christ. The conscientious Christian can therefore check up his conduct at any time, and discover the extent to which he may be lacking in his fulfilment of the commands of Christ. The priest tells the penitent sinner what he must do in order to win God's approval.

Questions for Consideration.—If every individual is left to determine for himself what Jesus asks of his disciples, can we expect agreement? Catholics regard the disagreements among Protestants as harmful to Christian loyalty. How would you answer this Catholic charge? Is it easier for a Catholic than for a Protestant to find out precisely what is required of a Christian? Would you be more conscientious if you were expected to go to a father confessor regularly? One of the requirements laid upon a good Catholic is abstinence from eating meat on Friday. Does the Catholic, in observing this requirement, think primarily of Jesus, or of the church? Does it seem to you that the things most emphasized in the Catholic way of life are the things most emphasized by Jesus? In one of the quotations given above it is said that the real message of Jesus is to be found in the *teaching* of the apostles and of their successors rather than merely in their writings. This makes the voice of the living church more important than the written words of the New Testament. Why does the Catholic church insist that the reading of the Bible shall be accompanied by explanations given by the church? Is the Catholic conception of Christian living likely to place high value on expressions of loyalty to the church? Compare the Catholic program for a Christian life with what you conceive Jesus' program to be.

III. THE MONASTIC CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

In all ages most of those who call themselves Christians fall far below the standards which we associate with the life of Jesus himself. We need only recall that the primary note of preaching through the centuries has been the message of forgiveness. This message assumes that even Christians sin and need salvation from sin. The Catholic church elaborates its program on the theory that ordinary Christians will always have sins to confess. The actual life of followers of Jesus gives plenty of occasion for adverse criticism.

Monasticism is a protest against letting down the bars in the realm of Christian living. This desire for absolute purity of life is characteristic of many religions. In Christianity it has claimed the devotion of countless thousands, and it is constantly cultivated in monasteries and convents the world over.

The Christian who devotes himself to a monastic life is expected to withdraw from the world. It is believed that the occasions for sin come from entanglement in worldly affairs. For this attitude the monk can cite good scriptural texts. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." In order to live a completely pure life, one must refuse to be compromised by the customs of the world, which so often require un-Christian conduct.

The main virtues of the Christian monk are poverty, chastity, humility, and obedience. In a way the last-named includes the others; for in choosing the simple life the monk is merely obeying literally what he believes to be the injunctions of Jesus. "How hardly shall those who have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." "Blessed are the meek." "If any one would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." In order to discipline mind and body so as to be able to resist temptation the monk devotes primary attention to exercises designed to cultivate and to fix an attitude of completely obedient devotion. Stated periods of prayer, solitary meditation, and observance of religious rites are prescribed. Self-examination is expected, and appropriate measures are taken to check unlawful appetites and to strengthen good purposes. In the best monastic communities a considerable amount of industrial and social activity is required; but the entire program of life is so arranged as to enhance the consciousness that the monk is called to a peculiarly spiritual type of life. In theological parlance, his is a "religious vocation," in contrast to the life of ordinary Christians where religion must find its place along with non-religious activities.

Questions for Consideration.—Do you think there is a tendency among the Christians whom you know to take it for granted that a thoroughgoing Christian life is a "counsel of perfection"? Is it a wholesome thing to see some individuals who are willing to forego the pleasures of worldliness for the sake of more consistent Christian life? Jesus did not engage in the ordinary pursuits of business. Jesus never married. If one were literally to follow Jesus would it be necessary to take the vows of poverty and chastity? Jesus said that his Kingdom was not of this

world. Is it easier to realize the ideals of the Kingdom in a monastic community than in the world? In what ways is the monastic ideal a wholesome challenge to Christians? Does the monastic program seem to you to be self-centered? Does the primary concern of the monk seem to you to be like the primary concern of Jesus? Why have monastic orders so often become corrupt? Compare the monastic ideal with what you conceive to be the ideal of Jesus.

IV. MARTIN LUTHER'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Martin Luther was trained as a Catholic and entered a monastery. He therefore knew the two ideals which we have just examined. His own experience led him to become profoundly dissatisfied with the programs which he there found. The Catholic church he discovered to be concerned quite as much for its own glorification and power as for the welfare of its members. One who submitted to its guidance would inevitably be devoting part of his energies to the service of ecclesiastical ambitions rather than to the will of Christ. Eventually Luther broke with the church.

Luther's criticism of the monastic way of living was equally trenchant. He felt that so much attention was given to the prescribed duties of the monastic life that the real spirit of Christ was lost. It was easy for the monk to regard himself as superior to those who had not taken monastic vows, and thus to trust in his own righteousness rather than in Christ.

Luther insisted that there is only one way in which to discover what a Christian life really is. The Christian must not depend upon the requirements of the church, nor must he be concerned with his own efforts at self-improvement. He must come into direct relationship with Christ himself. "As our heavenly Father has freely helped us in Christ, so ought we freely to help our neighbor by our body and works, and each should become to the other a sort of Christ, so that we may be mutually Christs, and that the same Christ may be in all of us; that is, that we may be truly Christians" (*Treatise on Christian Freedom*).

The all-important thing, then, is to have a direct experience of the saving power of Christ. The first step toward a Christian life is to trust Christ. What is theologically called "justification by faith" is the root from which all genuine goodness springs. In this faith, a man's life-purposes are changed so that henceforth, in grateful recognition of what Christ has done for him, the Christian will be eager to live so as to show his gratitude to Christ.

Good works do not make a good man; but a good man does good works. . . . Thus it is necessary that the substance or person should be good before any good works can be done, and that the good works should follow and proceed from a good person.

Since, then, works justify no man, but a man must be justified before he can do any good work, it is most evident that it is faith alone which, by the mere mercy of God through Christ, and by means of his word, can worthily and sufficiently justify and save a person;

and that a Christian needs no work, no law, for his salvation; for by faith he is free from all law, and in perfect freedom does gratuitously all that he does, seeking nothing of profit or of salvation—since by the grace of God he is already saved and rich in all things through his faith—but solely that which is well pleasing to God.

If we possess Christ, we shall easily make laws and judge all things correctly. Indeed, we shall make new decalogues, just as Paul did in all his epistles, and Peter, and especially Christ in the Gospel. Moreover, these decalogues will be a clearer revelation than the Decalogue of Moses, as the face of Christ was clearer than the face of Moses.

Luther thus opened a new way in which the Christian might walk worthily of Christ. It was a way provided by faith in the saving work of Christ. The man who is inwardly transformed by this faith is spiritually equipped freely to judge moral issues and to act so as to express the spirit of Christ.

Two important aspects of this ideal should be noted: (1) It releases the hold of the ecclesiastical system over men, and thus makes possible a simplification of Christian living. Those rites and ceremonies which Catholicism declares to be essential are now judged in the light of another principle. We are to look not to what Christ is alleged to have established officially long ago, but to what the living Christ now impels the Christian to do. The value of this principle in freeing Christian conduct from formalism is incalculable.

But (2) the living Christ, to whom Luther makes his appeal, is a somewhat intangible figure. It was natural for men of that age to take over something of the official character which had been emphasized in the Catholic interpretations. Protestantism readily fell into the habit of construing justification by faith as if it were justification by the acceptance of an official doctrine concerning Christ and his work. Saving "faith" was all too easily identified with the acceptance of an official creed. Peculiar merit was attributed to this acceptance, so that orthodoxy in doctrine came to be more of a test than Christlikeness of spirit. If Catholicism interprets the Christian life in terms of an ecclesiastically supervised program, Protestantism has too frequently interpreted it in terms of the adherence to a theological system. And it is just as possible to lose the real spirit of Christ behind theological debates as it is to lose that spirit behind an elaborate system of rites and ceremonies. Protestantism has its defects as well as its values.

Questions for Consideration.—The Roman Catholic church has a provision for granting "indulgence." An indulgence is some good work approved by the church which may take the place of the ordinary penance which a sinner must perform if he has sinned and confessed. Martin Luther discovered that in order to raise money for the building of St. Peter's cathedral in Rome, indulgences were being freely granted for money to be used in this building enterprise. Said he: "Christians should be taught that he who gives to a poor man, or lends to a needy man, does better than if he bought pardons; because by a work of charity, charity increases, and the man becomes better; while by means of pardons he does not become better, but only freer from punishment." Why did Luther protest so vehemently against

the sale of indulgences? If one seeks an indulgence, is he thinking of Jesus' way of living, or of his own personal advantage? Luther said: "Christians should be exhorted to strive to follow Christ, their head, through pains, death, and hells, and thus to enter heaven through many tribulations rather than in the security of peace." What kind of security does the system of penance give to a Christian? Is this security morally wholesome?

Luther, however, retained the current desire for security when he formulated his doctrine of justification by faith. The preaching of this doctrine, like the doctrine of penance, has been to a large extent concerned with the securing of forgiveness for past sins. If one is primarily concerned to be sure that he will escape hell, is he likely to be thinking seriously about Jesus' way of living? Is a death-bed repentance as significant an expression of Christian faith as is a life devoted to Jesus' way of living? Luther was sure that gratitude for free forgiveness would lead the forgiven sinner to devote his life to his savior. Do you think that this always occurs?

Is it easy to know just what is meant by "faith"? Precisely what are the conditions under which one may claim forgiveness? Has saving faith usually been presented as a doctrine to be accepted? Why do fundamentalists insist on the acceptance of certain doctrines as the indispensable condition of a real Christian experience? Do those who are zealous for doctrinal regularity seem to you to be thinking primarily of Jesus' way of living? What are the points in which the Protestant conception of the Christian life is superior to the Catholic conception? Do you see any defects in the original Protestant conception? Can one be absolutely certain of salvation without diverting attention from the moral aspects of Christian experience? Are some Protestants more concerned about their salvation than about their moral life?

V. THE MYSTIC'S INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

In all ages of Christianity there have been earnest souls who desired a more profound experience of Christ than that provided by the routine of ordinary worship and discipline. Just as the apostle Paul appealed to the living voice of Christ within, in contrast to the outer requirements of the law, so mystics have sought an independent and original source of inspiration and knowledge. So long as the Catholic church was in control of culture, such mysticism was largely an individual experience.

The Protestant Reformation, however, released men from the control of ecclesiastical routine and furnished an occasion for many outbursts of mystic or ecstatic fervor. It was felt that if one could be sure that he had immediate communion with Christ, or with the Holy Spirit, his life would be more Christlike than if he were to depend on external directions. Luther himself had declared that the Christian was in a position to make new decalogues.

In seeking this direct relationship to Christ, representations of peculiarly striking religious experiences in the New Testament were naturally of great influence. It was seen that the early Christians received from the risen Christ the gift of the Holy Spirit, and were thus enabled to speak with tongues, to prophesy, to heal,

and to work wonders. Such spectacular endowments easily catch the imagination. There have been little groups of Christians ever since the Reformation who have thought that such manifestations of the Spirit were to be coveted above all else.

Not always, however, was the power of the Spirit sought in such spectacular ways. It was frequently linked with a beautiful expression of the Spirit of Christ.

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born
If he's not born in thee thy soul is all forlorn.

The cross on Golgotha can never save thy soul
The cross in thine own heart alone can make thee whole.

Robert Barclay, an influential member of the Society of Friends, wrote: "Seeing 'no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him,' and seeing that the 'revelation of the Son is in and by the Spirit,' therefore the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed."

An ardent convert to the ideals of the early Quakers wrote as follows:

In all things we found the Light which we were enlightened withall, and all mankind (which is Christ) to be alone and onelie sufficient to bring to Life and eternal salvation. . . . And so we ceased from the teachings of all men, and their words, and their worships, and their Temples, and all their baptismes, and Churches, . . . and we met together often and waited upon the Lord in pure silence, from our own words and all men's words, and hearkened to the voice of the Lord, and felt his word in our hearts to burn up and beat down all that was contrary to God, and we obeyed the Light of Christ in us . . . and took up the Crosses to all earthly glories, Crowns, and waies, and denied ourselves, our relations, and all that stood in the way betwixt us and the Lord.

The Quakers have been the most conspicuous group of Christians who have trusted to the voice of the inner Spirit to guide them in the way of Christian living. But in practice even they do not rely entirely upon this inner voice. They look to the recorded words of Jesus for instructions; and in their eagerness to lead entirely Christlike lives insist on literal conformity to some of Jesus' teachings which other Christians regard as symbolic or suggestive. Thus the Quakers, along with their emphasis on the guidance of the Spirit, have also insisted on plain speech, peculiar dress, unwillingness to take oath, the practice of non-resistance. Their wonderful Christlikeness of life has not been entirely free from eccentricities. Those minor sects which have sought the direct and vivid experience of the Spirit have not always been as successful as the Quakers in securing wholesome and neighborly living. To rely entirely on the inner sense of the guidance of Christ means that the emotional idiosyncrasies of the individual may be taken for the voice of Christ. Peculiar notions and acts may thus acquire a sanctity which they do not deserve.

Questions for Consideration.—How can a person know whether a great emotional experience is directly caused by Christ? Is it easy to assume that what is emotionally significant is due to the presence of the Holy Spirit? There are sects today that hold that the Spirit enables a man to speak in a foreign tongue. Missionaries have gone abroad, expecting miraculously to speak a new language when they arrived on the field. How would you judge this kind of "faith"? What are the advantages of looking to an inner sense of what is Christlike, instead of relying on outer rules? Why do the Quakers enjoy so high a reputation for their way of living? Does the wearing of a distinctive plain dress help one to be more Christlike? Why are those bodies which make much of the immediate guidance of the Spirit usually distrusted by the churches?

VI. THE USE OF THE BIBLE AS A DIVINE GUIDE

We have seen how Luther undertook to free the Christian life from the dominion of the Catholic church, and to bring it back into direct contact with Christ. He believed that this was accomplished by the experience of justification by faith. When once the sinner was justified, Luther held that the sentiment of gratitude for what Christ had done for him would lead him freely to do Christ's will.

But the freedom which Protestant Christians enjoyed led to various difficulties. Just what was the content of saving faith? When Zwingli contended that the Christian did not need to believe that the real presence of Christ was in the bread and wine of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Luther appealed to the literal words of the New Testament, "This is my body," and would not recognize the legitimacy of Zwingli's symbolic interpretation. When some of the more radical spirits among the Anabaptists contended that the voice of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer could be trusted to lead him aright, Luther replied that the Holy Spirit would testify only to that which He had already declared in Scripture to be true.

Moreover, the early Protestants were constantly under the necessity of defending their revolt from the authority of the Catholic church. That church demanded their submission on the ground that it was the divinely commissioned institution for the administration of Christianity. The Protestants found that their most effective reply was to appeal to a divine authority which no one in those days questioned—the Bible. They challenged the Catholic church to prove out of the Bible the claims which they made on its behalf; and they tried to make their own expressions of Christianity conform to the requirements of the Bible. Thus Protestantism generally has interpreted the Christian life as one directed by the precepts of the Bible.

Persons who, abandoning the Scripture, imagine to themselves some other way of approaching God, must be considered as not so much misled by error as actuated by frenzy. For there have arisen lately some unsteady men, who, haughtily pretending to be taught by the Spirit, reject all reading themselves, and deride the simplicity of those who still attend to what they style the dead and killing letter.

The office of the Spirit, then, which is promised to us, is not to feign new and unheard-

of revelations, or to coin a new system of doctrine, which would seduce us from the received doctrine of the Gospel, but to seal to our minds the same doctrine which the Gospel delivers" (Calvin, *Institutes*, Book I, chap. ix).

Almost all the creeds of Protestantism affirm clearly that the sole and ultimate standard of what a Christian is to believe or to do is the Bible. The sermons of preachers have been supposed to be expositions of biblical truth. The religious instruction of children has, for the most part, consisted in making them learn what the Bible teaches. Two or three typical statements are here given:

We believe, confess, and teach that the only rule and norm according to which all dogmas and all doctors (teachers) ought to be esteemed and judged, is no other whatever than the prophetic and apostolic writings both of the Old and of the New Testament (Formula of Concord).

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation (Thirty-Nine Articles).

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men (Westminster Confessions).

When, however, we turn from the *theory* that the Bible is an infallible guide, and observe the actual state of affairs in Protestant Christianity, we discover certain facts which demand serious consideration.

1. If the Bible is a sufficient guide, why are there such differences of opinion among Protestant Christians? How can an infallible book be an infallible guide unless there is an infallible interpreter? The Roman Catholic church sees this problem clearly. Says one noted Catholic:

As soon as the Reformers rejected the oracle of the Church and set up their own private judgment as the highest standard of authority, they could hardly agree among themselves on the meaning of a single important text. . . . In our day there exists a vast multitude of sects which are daily multiplying. . . . And every one of these champions of modern creeds appeals to the unchanging Bible in support of his ever-changing doctrines" (Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers*).

Allowing for the exaggeration in this statement, it does express clearly a difficulty which inheres in the appeal to the Bible. The Protestant assumption of the competency of everyone to interpret the Bible has led to serious misunderstandings. Accomplished scholars have been at work for more than a century ascertaining more precisely how the books of the Bible were written, and exactly what the writers meant to say. As might be expected, this scholarly work has led to some rather radical alterations of popular conceptions concerning the Bible and its teachings.

But so tenaciously have Protestants generally identified older and familiar interpretations with the Word of God itself, that departures from the traditional views are regarded as almost blasphemous, and devout scholars have been assailed as "enemies of the Word of God." It should be evident that when Christians are led to make harsh comments on the work of reverent biblical scholars, and to create distrust of scholarly methods of interpretation, something is wrong with the ethical principles involved. It is possible to be so tenacious of a certain conception of biblical authority that one shall forget to ask what the spirit of Jesus would demand. If Catholicism has substituted the voice of the church for the voice of Jesus, has not Protestant biblicism often substituted a few biblical texts, or a peculiar interpretation of these texts, for an appeal to the guidance of Jesus?

2. The difficulties of this way of appeal to the Bible appear if we ask: "What ought a Christian to believe?" So far are Protestants from believing alike that they have divided into sects largely on the basis of differing beliefs. And all appeal to the same Bible. As a matter of fact, the Bible gives expression to many varieties of belief, arising out of very varied conditions at various times of history. Some of the beliefs and practices of the early Israelites have been left behind in the development of religion. The polygamy of the patriarchs would not be tolerated in modern Christendom. The sacrificial system of the Hebrews is no longer observed by Christians. Indeed, the appeal to the Bible is always highly selective. People quote and remember those texts which positively reinforce their own convictions; and they either fail to note or quietly disregard those which they cannot put into practice. The *real* sources of belief are not in the Bible, but in the influence of trusted parents and teachers who enable us to find in the Bible what is already believed in the Christian community. The all-important question is whether the convictions of the community are Christlike in character, rather than to discover proof-texts to support them. How much more satisfactory it would be, in case of a perplexing question like the proper observance of Sunday, if we were to ask what Jesus said and did, and how he thought of the Sabbath, rather than to rest back merely on biblical statements taken from a pre-Christian era.

3. The present confusion in the minds of many people concerning the relationship between religion and science is due to the assumption that one's Christian duty can be adequately determined by consulting the Bible. Nearly four centuries ago conscientious Christians were led to suppose that it was wrong to adopt the Copernican astronomy. The Bible was quoted as declaring, "The earth is established that it cannot be moved" (Ps. 93). It was therefore assumed that to believe that the earth moves around the sun is sinful. When men like Galileo were convinced on scientific grounds that the earth moves, they were compelled to say that what they really believed to be truth was false. We can imagine how Jesus, with his vigorous denunciation of hypocrisy, would have judged a theological theory which required men to profess to believe what they did not really believe.

In our day a similar confusion of thought exists concerning the doctrine of evolution. Mr. Bryan said: "Those who teach Darwinism are undermining the faith of Christians; they are raising questions about the Bible as an authoritative source of truth; . . . A teacher might just as well write over the door of his room, 'Leave Christianity behind you, all ye who enter here,' as to ask his students to accept a hypothesis directly and irreconcilably antagonistic to the Bible."

One of the most necessary developments in modern Christian thinking is the emancipation of conscience from the tyranny of literalism. If the Gospels were read with discernment, the followers of Jesus would see how he always set sincerity of the inner life above the mere letter of scripture. Indeed, he was accused by strict literalists of destroying the law and the prophets, when he was actually deepening the experience of religion. The fifth chapter of Matthew may well be read in this connection.

4. Another questionable consequence of resorting exclusively to the Bible to determine conduct is the ease with which minor and nonessential things come to be regarded as exceedingly important, just because they are explicitly mentioned in the Bible. The writer of this study recalls vividly an occasion when a visiting preacher was entertained in our home. On his arrival, on a cold winter evening, my mother had at great pains prepared a fine hot dinner, with roast pork as the main dish. The visitor very conspicuously declined to take any because the eating of pork was forbidden in the Bible. I was more profoundly impressed with the selfish discourtesy of the guest than with his piety.

There are Protestant bodies which lay great stress on certain rituals or practices, simply because they are commanded in the Bible. Feet-washing, salutation with a holy kiss, baptism by immersion, refusal to take an official oath, the use of plain speech, the refusal to use titles ("Call no man master"), the insistence on psalms (biblical) instead of hymns (non-biblical) in church service—these are some of the things on which much stress is laid. Professor Rauschenbusch tells of a farmer whose milk was condemned by an inspector because it was dirty. The farmer was so angry that he swore. He was disciplined by his church, not because he was willing to sell bad milk to feed to babies, but because he had been guilty of breaking the biblical injunction, "Swear not at all." Thus does the narrow appeal to biblical texts warp moral perspective, exactly as in Jesus' day men were scrupulous about tithing mint, anise, and cummin (tithing was required in their Bible), but forgot to be equally scrupulous in matters of human justice and kindness.

5. It is essential to a genuinely Christian use of the Bible that the Scriptures should not be permitted to usurp the place of supremacy which belongs to Jesus Christ. Professor William Newton Clarke clearly warned against this danger in his book, *The Use of the Scriptures in Theology*. Following are some citations from his argument:

Speaking in terms of time we can say that they (the Scriptures) contain a Christian and a pre-Christian part; speaking in terms of quality, that they contain a Christian and a non-Christian element. . . . What is pre-Christian, or non-Christian, may lie close upon the spiritual borders of Christianity, or may be far removed from the Christian view of things: Christ may have superseded it by completion, or by contradiction. . . . The point to be held fast and for certain is that the Bible does bring us the contribution of Christ, together with much that did not proceed from him. . . . But nothing that is not Christian in its genuine quality has any place in our Christian theology, even though we may have read it on the pages of the Bible. . . . If any proposed doctrine contradicts the large meaning and spirit of Christ, of course Christian theology must have none of it. . . . Put the Bible to its true use, as servant of Jesus Christ. . . . But do not claim or represent or imply that everything in the Bible is true forever, or bears the authority of God for living men today. . . . Accept no obligation to make non-Christian matter Christian, or to keep alive what Christ has done to death.

During the past quarter of a century the older Protestant conception of the Bible has been vanishing, largely because the more accurate study of the Bible has shown that it is not the kind of a book that the early reformers supposed it to be. This disappearance of biblical authority is a source of great distress to many people, who feel that it must mean a decline in religion. If, however—as seems to be largely the case—this changed view of the Bible is coincident with a more serious purpose to understand and to put into practice the principles exemplified and taught by Jesus, the transfer of emphasis from the Bible to Jesus may very well be evidence of the deepening of Christian faith and devotion. A better perspective will be gained when Christians attempt to live so as to be worthy of Christ, rather than to conform to the Bible without making the further test of asking whether their acts are Christlike in quality.

Questions for Further Consideration.—Why did the early Protestant Reformers insist so strongly that all Christian beliefs and practices should be justified by the Bible? Is there any similarity between the Catholic appeal to an infallible church and the Protestant appeal to an infallible Bible? Is it possible for one to quote the Bible in defense of a practice which Jesus would not approve? When slaveholders justified slavery by quoting Scripture, were they employing a Christian test? The apostle Paul sent a runaway slave back to his master. He said, "Slaves, obey your masters." Can the question as to whether slavery is right be determined by appeal to the Bible? Those who believe that it is wrong to forbid men to drink alcoholic liquor often quote the example of Jesus in turning water into wine at Cana. How would you answer such an argument?

The historical study of the Bible has made it clear that the claim of infallibility which has been made for it is not justified by the facts. Why are biblical scholars who call attention to these facts so often regarded as enemies of the Bible? If a person is dismayed at finding that he cannot settle all questions by appeal to the Bible, is this dismay a sign that he has not been taught to apply a genuinely Christian test? Read the fifth chapter of Matthew, and formulate what seems to have been Jesus' attitude toward the Bible.

Luther condemned the Copernican hypothesis on the ground that it was contrary to the teaching of the Bible. He said that Joshua commanded the *sun* to stand still, not the earth. This, of course, implied that according to the Bible it is the sun that moves. Does the Bible represent the earth as immovable? Do you ever feel obligated to make your conceptions of astronomy correspond to the biblical conceptions? If not, why not? Which do you think Jesus would value more highly, honesty in conviction, or conformity to a biblical statement? Do the statements of those who attack modern scientists seem to you to be the expression of a Christian spirit? May a modern Christian hold a theory concerning the origin of the earth and of man different from that expressed in Genesis? If so, why? If not, why not? See if the answers to these questions do not reveal the difference between a biblical test and a Christian test.

A biblical text reads: "Salute one another with a holy kiss." There are certain bodies which observe this command. Are they more in accord with Christian principles than those bodies which do not follow this practice? Are immersed Christians better than those baptized in other ways? How can a Quaker be a Christian if he does not follow the scriptural command to be baptized? The eating of pork is forbidden in the Bible. What right have modern Christians to eat it? Do you think it is possible for one to follow *all* the precepts of the Bible? If not, how shall one determine which to follow and which to neglect?

Do you agree with Dr. Clarke's statement that there are non-Christian elements in the Bible? What standard for Christian living does Dr. Clarke commend? If one has clearly come to see that Christian living is a matter of sharing the spirit of Jesus, is such a person likely to be disturbed by the disappearance of the older idea of biblical authority?

VII. THE REDISCOVERY OF JESUS

One of the striking characteristics of present-day thinking in Protestantism is the eager desire to get back of church regulations and back of formal biblical precepts to a better understanding of Jesus himself. Until comparatively recently Jesus has been interpreted almost entirely in terms of theological interests. But the past century has seen a vast amount of scholarly research directed to the purpose of disclosing the actual traits of Jesus as he lived among men. A noted New Testament scholar has said:

In the past, it must be admitted, it has not been the Jesus of history that has occupied the thoughts and hearts of men, but that idealized figure of the exalted Lord, a figure that has been developed in the process of Christian life, and from much that existed before and around it. . . . Century after century the good and powerful Man of Nazareth has been hidden in the overwhelming glory of the King of Heaven. The gifts that he left and the demands that he made of men have been presented at a lower level, in order to hold the masses to him. Sometimes these demands and these gifts have been declared to relate to a future life, and men have lived on here just as their fathers did of old, in war and the shedding of blood, in deeds of violence and oppression, in belief in dogmas and the performance of sacred ceremonies. Occasionally the figure of Jesus himself has been held up before men, and his gentle and courageous character has for a moment again become manifest. Since the end of the eighteenth century an even louder call has been made to know and to under-

stand the Jesus of history, and even larger numbers have been affected by the appeal. Thus at the end of the nineteenth century, the question of the value and truth of Christianity was taken as practically identical with the question of the personality and the teaching of Jesus. More than ever before, men ask today for Jesus himself. He that hath ears to hear, hears that he has come again to judge, to seek, and to save (Weinel, *Jesus in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 30).

The consequence of this ardent research is the discovery that it is a profound and difficult undertaking to recover the historical Jesus. He has been identified with so many different ideals that it is not easy to make the distinction between what men would like to find and what the historical facts actually warrant. Gradually, however, it has become clear that whoever attempts to make Jesus the official sponsor for any fixed system is sure to be on the wrong track. Historical investigation has made it certain that Jesus was not an official founder of an authoritative church, that he was not the official maker of a code of laws, but that he was deeply concerned at the havoc wrought by officialism in the religion of his day. Jesus was a layman, not a theologian; a companion of men, not an official figure; a person winning men by the profundity and the simplicity of his own religious experience, and inviting all followers of his in all ages to share that experience.

In the next study we shall consider some aspects of this new sense of nearness to Jesus and its consequences for Christian living today.

REMARKS

Students desiring certificates may for this month send in answers to twenty questions selected by themselves from those under "Questions for Consideration" in any portion of this study.

The following books will serve to strengthen the impression which this study has given of the successive changes in the interpretation of Christianity through the ages. The last four titles represent the most constructive Christian thinking at the present time:

- J. M. Cooper, *Religion Outlines for Colleges* (textbooks for students in Catholic colleges).
- J. Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers* (a famous exposition of Catholic faith and practice).
- I. C. Hannah, *Christian Monasticism*.
- Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*.
- Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian Man*.
- Rufus M. Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*.
- James M. Gray, *Primer of the Faith*.
- William Newton Clarke, *Sixty Years with the Bible*.
- Charles W. Gilkey, *Jesus and Our Generation*.
- Samuel Dickey, *The Constructive Revolution of Jesus*.
- Weinel and Widgery, *Jesus in the Nineteenth Century and After*.

STUDY IX

TESTING MODERN LIFE BY JESUS' WAY OF LIVING

By GERALD BIRNEY SMITH

I. CHRISTIANITY IN THE MODERN WORLD

We are entering upon a new era in Christian thought and practice. The medieval church undertook to organize humanity on the assumption that only Christians had full rights. The state was expected to support the church. A Christian civilization was to be officially established and maintained.

This conception persisted even in Protestantism. It was at first generally assumed that there should be a state church in every nation. It was for a long time taken for granted that only those who belonged to the officially recognized church should have full rights as citizens. The entire machinery of politics and of social opinion was on the side of the church. It was scarcely respectable for a man not to belong to the officially approved church.

This political status of Christianity has now well-nigh vanished. In the organization of the government of the United States express provision was made for the official separation of church and state. This means that there is no longer any particular prestige to be gained from belonging to a church. To an increasing extent attention has shifted from the official character of Christianity to the less spectacular but more significant question as to the power of Christian faith in the individual life. It is coming to be seen clearly that Christianity must now stand on its own feet and be judged by its actual values without resting on any appeal to external or official support.

In short, Christianity in the modern world is an unofficial religion which must make its way by the free consent of men. No one is required to be a Christian in order to participate in present-day political or social life. Our universities are insisting on complete freedom of research and of teaching. Our political and our educational habits are now such that the profession of Christianity is an entirely voluntary matter. If Christian ideals are to continue in our modern civilization, they must prevail because they convince men of their inherent excellence, not because of their official prestige.

Questions for consideration.—How do you feel when you read of the treatment of heretics in former centuries? Why have we ceased to inflict punishment on heretics? What is an "established church"? What are the arguments in favor of such establishment? Why did the United States refuse to sanction any established church? Does it make Christianity less dignified if it becomes a voluntary religion? If a church can depend on support from the state will it be as likely to develop its

full powers? Does an "established church" usually regard other forms of Christianity as worthy of full respect? As you think of any particular church in your city or town, what traits entitle it to your respect or support? To what extent do official reasons play a part in your attitude? Is it a gain or a loss for Christianity to be compelled to rest its case solely on its spiritual power over conscience?

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MODERN INTEREST IN JESUS

Coincident with the vanishing of official claims for Christianity has been the eager quest of scholars and of religious leaders for a better knowledge of what Jesus taught. Instinctively it is felt that if our Christianity is to be tested by its inner quality rather than by its official support, that quality must be purified. For such purification men have turned with new confidence to Jesus. During the past few decades an enormous amount of research has been undertaken with the purpose of making us better acquainted with Jesus. As a consequence of this study much of the former official emphasis has vanished. Men have come to see that Jesus was not at all interested in keeping intact a system of theology or in founding an official church, or even in giving to the world a complete ethical system. He was primarily interested in human beings. He found an elaborate religious system which was not flexible enough to meet the needs of those who most needed religion. His criticisms of this system brought upon him the distrust of those who considered themselves its guardians. With the vanishing, in our day, of official guaranties of religion, men are increasingly looking to Jesus to help them discern afresh the true values of life and to relate religious experience to those values. Emphasis is coming to be laid upon Jesus' way of living rather than upon official tests.

Questions for consideration.—A consideration of the titles of modern books on religion would reveal the fact that a surprising number of these deal with the life and the teaching of Jesus. Several years ago Dr. Charles H. Sheldon published a widely read book entitled *In His Steps*. Have you ever read it? It attempts to indicate what Jesus would do today if he were here as an editor, a teacher, a day laborer, an employer, a government official, etc. Would such a study be a searching test of genuine Christianity? Can you picture Jesus in such occupations? Have you usually pictured him in some official capacity? Does it seem to you to be significant that the disappearance of official emphasis in church life should be accompanied by the effort to recover for us an unofficial picture of Jesus?

III. WHAT WAS JESUS' WAY OF LIVING?

The second study in this course undertook to sketch the main traits of Jesus' own way of living. Without repeating the outline there, we may here call attention to three or four characteristics which have especial pertinence in our modern attempts to live worthily.

1. *The genuineness of his life.*—It is impossible to conceive Jesus as playing a part, or as exalting a claim of official standing. It is true that the writers of the Gospels, like most theologians since, felt that his character was such that he could appropri-

ately be considered as the perfect example of some official figure—a prophet, a messiah, a priest. But whenever any such term was applied to Jesus it at once became necessary to reinterpret it in order not to misrepresent Jesus himself. The conception of messiahship has most often been used in connection with Jesus; but in the next breath those who assert him to be the Messiah have to say that he was a very different figure from what the Messiah was expected to be. It is probable that we shall get closest to Jesus if we cease to apply any official title to him; for his greatness was far superior to that lent by a title. An overmastering faith and love made people trust him long before anyone dared to suggest that he might be the Messiah. Such genuine simplicity as Jesus manifested outlives any theological or ecclesiastical theories concerning him. It is a peculiarly potent trait in these days when official ecclesiasticism is so often under suspicion.

2. *His unwavering faith in a better life made possible by fellowship with God.*—Against all shallow complacency Jesus set his face steadfastly. Whether it was the self-righteous Pharisee thanking God that he was so much better than other people, or the rich fool who trusted in his wealth to give him abundant life, or the scribe who accepted the doctrine of neighborliness but did not know who his neighbor was, Jesus always pointed to a better life. And this better life consisted in letting God take the place hitherto assumed by conventional virtues or practices. Christianity has always treasured this ideal, although it has not always interpreted it in the simplicity of Jesus' way of living. In reply to the pessimism or cynicism of those who insist that "you can't change human nature," Christianity has always replied with its doctrine of regeneration. Perhaps nothing is more needed in our age than a revival of Jesus' faith in the possibility of a better life through the transforming power and presence of God.

3. Out of this personal genuineness and this faith in the possibility of a better life came his wonderful interest in people. He wanted each individual person to experience the better life. He cared little or nothing about the institutional form of religion. He cared supremely that religion should be a personal possession. Consequently he was ready both to honor and to discredit institutional religion—to honor it when it really ministered to men; to discredit it when it merely added to their burdens. Religious institutions and forms should serve men, not lord it over them. In this concern for immediate values in personal life we find the main reason why our age is so eager to find Jesus and to experience again his leadership.

Questions for consideration.—Have you ever thought how essential honesty is in religion? Why do we distrust the sanctimonious man? What is hypocrisy? What was Jesus' attitude toward hypocrisy? If religion is defined in terms of conformity to some prescribed standard, what happens to the religion of a person who cannot honestly conform? Why have interpreters of Jesus so frequently tried to make him out to be an official person? Does he seem closer to you when you think of him as an official figure, or when you think of him as an unofficial friend?

Do most Christians seem to you to be satisfied with what is less than their

best? What was Jesus' attitude toward a religious life which was just passably good? What was his main objection to the standards upheld by the Pharisees? Why did he commend the publican who confessed his sins rather than the Pharisee who recited his good deeds? Do you think that Christians today need to acquire a more vigorous faith in Jesus' way of living? Name some standards complacently accepted today which you think Jesus might rebuke.

Was Jesus primarily interested in religion as an institution, or in the religious possibilities of people? Why are so many people today distressed when they see forms of institutional religion giving way? How would you characterize Jesus' attitude toward the organized religion of his day?

IV. THE RELIGION OF JESUS AND THE RELIGION OF THE CHURCH

Opinion concerning the church is undergoing great changes. There is a great deal of adverse criticism of the church—some of it deserved, and some of it captious and shallow. There is also a praiseworthy amount of eager and adventurous reconstruction being attempted by those who have the religious welfare of people most at heart. Let us ask how the attempt to introduce Jesus' way of living into our church relationships would help us to do our part in making the church worthy of him.

Because of a long historical development the church is probably regarded by most people as the divinely appointed institution in which individuals may find salvation. Since everyone wants to be saved, there is a predisposition to accept the leadership of the church. But we discover that mere membership in a church does not necessarily produce Christian character. Men have often hoped to be saved by trusting in the merit of some ritual or doctrine. Is it not true that in many cases church members have never been led to apply to their own membership the test of Jesus' way of living?

What ought a church member to believe? A first consideration in answering this question would be to remember Jesus' attitude towards hypocrisy. Pretense of any kind is fatal to the spirit which Jesus creates and expects in his disciples. A genuine follower of Jesus must believe what he really can believe honestly. It is here that mistakes are often made. The church can and does present to its members the great doctrines which have been held by its leaders. But in the course of nineteen centuries of theological thinking an enormous amount and variety of doctrine have been produced. We should make a distinction between the duty of the church to proclaim in full its historical treasures and the duty of the individual to be honest in his relationship to this great body of doctrine. Each of us has the privilege of appropriating all that he can; but the amount which a given person affirms will depend upon his temperament, his training, and his theological aptitude. Many excellent Christians get along with very little formal doctrine. Others work out somewhat elaborate systems.

The spirit in which one holds a doctrine is far more important than the precise content of the doctrine. If I affirm a belief in such a way as to alienate people I am

not practicing Jesus' way of living. If, when I announce my belief, those who hear me are not impelled to become more Christlike in spirit, something is wrong. If hatred is permitted to arise on the basis of theological differences the zeal of the disputants is being misdirected. If, because I accept a doctrine which others deny, or if because I have "emancipated" myself from what I regard as a superstition, I therefore assume that I am more pleasing to God than my opponent, I am in danger of missing Jesus' way of life. Belief and the utterance of belief should be an expression of loyalty to Jesus in that service which Jesus himself most valued, viz., the privilege of actually helping people to experience more largely the blessings of religion. Do theological disputations tend to this result?

The authority of the church is to be judged by this test. What right has a church to require this or that practice? If the church is really the "body of Christ," its discipline will be dominated by the purpose to create in men a dynamic love for Jesus and his way of living. Those rituals which actually accomplish this will be welcomed. Those requirements which distract attention from the supreme importance of Christlike living need to be re-examined and adjusted. It is questionable whether a genuinely Christlike church will be much concerned about its "authority." It will be much more anxious to discover whether it is enabling men to experience the spirit of Jesus.

This means that a church is really dependent on the lives of its members for its influence and power. The spirit of Jesus cannot be adequately described in theology, or defined in creeds. Its quality becomes evident only as it appears in the attitude and the personal influence of followers of Jesus. Laymen have been too prone to resort to the church to save them. Sometimes, however, a church sinks so low that it has to depend on laymen to save it. The real life of the church is in the people who belong to it. A group of men and women following Jesus' way of living will profoundly influence a community apart from all questions of polity or creed.

Questions for discussion.—Why do you belong to your church? Does the community life of your church make it easier for you to live in a Christlike manner? How would you formulate the test to be applied for admission to the church?

Do you think of the church as having power to secure your salvation? What do you mean by salvation? How can a Christian know whether he is saved? The Roman Catholic church denies or questions the possibility of salvation in a Protestant church. What test is applied in such a judgment?

What ought a Christian to believe? Can any one man tell another what he ought to believe? Can you formulate a Christian test of belief? What ought a Christian to believe about the Bible? What ought a Christian to believe concerning the saving work of Christ? How would you find out what you ought to believe?

The Pharisees prided themselves on the correctness and the exactness of their religious practices. What did Jesus object to in the attitude of a Pharisee? Are there any pharisaical Christians? Is a man's real Christianity to be discovered by asking what his creed is?

What "authority" has a church? Which counts for more, technical authority, or the presence of lovable, generous church members? Do church members usually realize how dependent the church is on their worthy behavior for its actual influence in the world? In what sense is the church the "body of Christ"? If Jesus were to appear in your church what do you think his judgment would be on the prevailing standards and practices?

V. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN FAMILY?

There is no greater blessing than a happy, wholesome home life. Few experiences put a more severe strain on the individual than uncongenial relationships in the family. The inevitable intimacy of members of the family enables each to know and to feel the defects of other members. When causes of irritation are permitted to assume more than passing importance, unpleasant scenes are likely to result. Christianity has from the first exalted the importance of home life, and in this emphasis it is supported by the best social science.

In the endeavor to secure the best possible conditions for family life the Christian church has made numerous regulations. The Roman Catholic church insists that there can be only one kind of marriage acceptable to God, viz., a marriage celebrated under the supervision of the church. Such a marriage is regarded as sacred, and divorce is forbidden because it would sully the sanctity of marriage. Catholic parents pledge themselves to bring up their children in the Catholic faith. All the official sanctions of religion are thus invoked as so to secure a Christian home. Protestantism has relaxed to a large extent the Catholic sacramental theory of marriage; but it still retains many traditional ecclesiastical ideas concerning the family. Until quite recently it was generally assumed that the father was the official head of the family to such an extent that he had a right to exact obedience to his will from wife and children alike. The bride was required to promise to "obey" her husband. Christians are frequently greatly puzzled in their thinking about divorce when, as is sometimes the case, they must balance a formal ecclesiastical condemnation against the evident welfare of the people concerned.

It is to be feared that in most cases no serious effort is made to judge family life by the test of Jesus' way of living. Young people form their conception of marriage largely on the basis of popular novels or the sentimental love-making portrayed in the movies. Mere romantic sex appeal or considerations of social prestige are likely to have a far larger place in shaping ideals than do the considerations afforded by actual Christian living. It is only when we have the opportunity to see the uplifting power of a genuinely Christian home that we realize how imperfect is our education for this fundamental relationship of life.

If we were to picture Jesus as a member of a family, what would be his attitude toward his parents and toward his brothers and sisters? What would he regard as the indispensable qualifications for marriage? It is only by asking some such questions as these that we can rise above the formalism of official regulations. The

sanctity of marriage, when thus viewed, is something far more profound than having the wedding ceremony performed in ecclesiastically correct fashion. The relation of the father to the other members of the family can scarcely be adequately represented by the requirement of obedience. Jesus' way of living was to make every human relationship the expression of a genuine personal interest in the welfare of others; in other words, to make all life so far as possible a sharing of wholesome experiences, to the spiritual enrichment of all.

The love which leads two persons to wish to marry is one of the most fundamental and engrossing passions of human nature. When this passion is controlled and directed by Christlike ideals it creates and sustains a companionship of the most wonderful beauty and power. Marriage is normally a lifelong relationship, because the kind of love which justifies marriage expresses itself in the honest desire to cherish this companionship "always." But the sacredness of the marriage relationship depends upon the presence of just this unselfish love and loyalty on both sides. When husband and wife thus realize a complete and satisfying sharing of each other's life, the union is sacred because of its intrinsic quality. While a religious ceremony greatly enhances and reinforces this quality, it may be present if the marriage be initiated by a civil ceremony. On the other hand, the mere words of a priest cannot hallow a marriage which lacks the tenderness and the unselfish devotion of true love, nor can the absence of such words impair the sacredness of a life-union which expresses genuine love and loyalty.

In judging divorce much help could be gained by trying to employ the principles which were so characteristic of Jesus—honesty, faith in a better life, and interest in persons. Undoubtedly most divorces come because of un-Christlike behavior on the part of one or both of the parties concerned. If disillusionment comes after the romantic idealization of courtship, is it usually met and overcome by faith in the possibility of a better life? Does the husband want his wife to be the kind of person he wants her to be rather than to be her honest self? How much irritation arises because we forget the fundamental Christian principle of concern for the other person. Marriage at its best means significant adjustments by which each person is permitted to realize himself while at the same time sharing his best self with others. If divorce is sought without trying to realize faith in a better kind of living, it is sought on un-Christian principles. At the same time it is undeniable that occasionally divorce relieves an otherwise intolerable situation. Mistakes are made in marriage as well as in all other human enterprises. Jesus would make it possible for people to overcome their mistakes in the way best calculated to bring a better life, and no hard-and-fast rule can be rigidly administered in such delicate situations.

In our day the old-fashioned "virtue" of obedience on the part of children has largely disappeared. It is coming to be generally recognized that a child is a person as truly as an adult, and that children have indubitable "rights." To override such rights by the exercise of harsh authority is certainly not a Christian way of pro-

cedure. Fortunately the natural love of parents for their children makes easy the sharing of their life in sympathetic fashion if there be only the genuine desire to do so. What judgment would Jesus pass on a father who was always "too busy" to go with his boy as an informal companion to events dear to a boy's heart? What would he say to a mother who permitted social duties to crowd out all opportunity for intimate sharing of her daughter's life? The general breakdown of the older formal discipline in the modern home gives to parents an opportunity to learn what Jesus' way of living really is. Genuineness, faith in a better life, eagerness to share the life of others—these will go far toward pointing out the way.

Questions for discussion.—Is marriage a "Christian institution"? How would you judge the validity of marriages in non-Christian lands? What constitutes the "sanctity" of the marriage relation? Baptism is a prerequisite to marriage in the Catholic church. Why? How would the marriage of two Quakers be judged according to this standard? How would you judge it? Why did the traditional marriage service require the bride to promise to obey her husband?

What do you think Jesus would consider most important as a qualification for marriage? What impression of marriage do people gain from the motion pictures? What impression do they get from modern novels? Is the Catholic church right in insisting on some definite Christian preparation for marriage? What preparation would you suggest as one that would help toward securing Christlike attitudes on the part of husband and wife?

Ought divorce to be absolutely forbidden to Christians? Why are divorces sought? If disappointment or disillusionment comes in marriage, how can the ideal of Jesus' way of living help to overcome difficulties?

Are parents today having more difficulty than parents of other times in their relations with their children? Does obedience cover the entire duty of the child? Do parents generally rely too completely on their formal authority? Did Jesus rely on authority or on personal companionship in his relations with people? How does the present attitude of youth open the door to a new experiment in family relationships? What gives a child confidence in a parent?

VI. CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORLINESS

Read the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Here we have an admirable example of the difference between official religion and Jesus' way of looking at things. An official religion proceeds on the basis of exact definitions and distinctions. The lawyer, when confronted with the command in his Bible to love his neighbor, asked Jesus to define a neighbor. Instead of defining, Jesus told his story and then asked: "Which of these three was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves?" An official religion would undertake to define a neighbor. Jesus would have men feel in neighborly fashion toward one another.

Many of our shortcomings are due to resting content with official relations. We define beforehand the status of a person and let this definition determine our behavior. A laundress is thought of merely in terms of the service which she is supposed to render, and we feel toward her in terms of this very partial expression of her personality. Employer and employee are usually primarily concerned with

official commercial relationships. When we learn something of the non-official character and activity of a person, we are often surprised and gratified. Watch the faces of saleswomen in a department store. Some of them wear an expression of utter indifference to the customer. Some reveal a personal interest in the customer's wants. Neighborliness is a business asset as well as a religious virtue. You will be likely to do your purchasing where you are made to feel that there is a personal interest in satisfying your wants. There are a few rare souls who radiate a genial atmosphere of good will in whatever they do. If one has something of the spirit of Jesus such expressions of good will come to be habitual. It is our privilege to be neighborly in all official relationships. Perhaps the general diffusion of such a spirit would be of more value in formulating official codes than we realize.

Another fruitful source of separation between persons is the dominance of social distinctions, which take precedence of human interests. Read Luke 5:29-32. We easily place a person in a class and assume that all members of this class have certain "inferior" characteristics. To the strict Pharisees it was incredible that Jesus should put himself on the lower social level of those from whom they themselves held aloof. But the essential neighborliness of Jesus' way of living broke down artificial barriers. Here again the important thing is to feel rightly toward others.

One of the serious problems facing the modern world is what is called "race prejudice." This prejudice is one of the greatest sins of the so-called "white" race. We begin by defining all other races as "inferior." Then we proceed to think of each individual of an "inferior" race as being himself "inferior." In its most brutal form this prejudice manifests itself in deliberate suppression of any aspirations for a higher life on the part of individuals of the other race. The Negro is said to be "all right if he keeps his place." This place is defined in such a way that if a Negro aspires to enter certain "higher" walks of life he may be accused of wrongly attempting to get what does not belong to him by right. If neighborliness is permitted at all, it must be in patronizing ways which tacitly declare the supremacy of the "superior" race.

Race prejudice is so common that it is taken for granted that it is "natural," if not inevitable. The fact is that it, like all prejudices, is due partly to the primitive feeling of strangeness in the presence of something different from that to which one is accustomed in his own group, and partly to the suggestions of a social theory. We have not yet seriously tried to see how far prejudice can be modified if we honestly make the attempt to "love justice" rather than to indulge our emotions. Is not the experience of yielding to race prejudice often an agreeable way of taking credit to ourselves for an alleged "superiority" which we have done nothing to earn? May it not be like the pharisaism which Jesus condemned?

Another form of unneighborliness is clannishness. Have you ever had the bitter experience of being deliberately shut out from companionship in some group which

you longed to join? Especially in our recreations are we liable to let our natural inclinations get the better of our Christian profession. We like certain persons better than we do others, and we almost insensibly become "exclusive." There is no finer service to be rendered by Christian young people than the practice of thoughtfulness in this matter. If we ask here: "Who is my neighbor?" might we not expect Jesus to reply by depicting a party where some lonesome and wistful boy or girl was being neglected by those whose interest never went beyond their special friends, Jesus would ask, "Who showed himself to be neighbor to the lonesome one?" To prevent our recreations and our friendships from becoming selfish we need definitely to apply the test of Jesus' way of living, and to ask whether we are neighborly.

A wider and more difficult realm in which to practice Christian living is in those relationships which are so highly organized that personal contacts are rare and negotiations usually are in the hands of officials. When I invest money it is taken out of my hands and is used to support some industrial enterprise which I do not manage myself. How can my neighborliness be expressed in the economic order? As a citizen I must permit relationships with other countries to be officially arranged by government heads. It may occur that the management of a business enterprise or the conduct of a government is in the hands of those who yield to baser motives. Economic and national strife result. When a strike occurs, how can a workman be neighborly to his employer? When war is declared how can a soldier be neighborly to the soldiers in a hostile army?

The answer is plain. Strife makes neighborliness impossible. When it occurs, Jesus' way of living must be abandoned. Who can measure the blighting consequences of a bitter economic strife or a war between nations? These unhappy events give the lie to all that Christian faith affirms. But when the war is actually on or the strike actually declared, it is too late to put into practice a Christian way of living. In some way the disorder has first to be ended in order to give a chance for more sober reasoning.

Therefore Christian sentiment is vigorously seeking to create in times of peace such an abhorrence of war that men shall cease to think of it as the inevitable way of settling difficulties. For war itself settles nothing. It only forces a recalcitrant power to be willing to stop fighting and to discuss terms of peace. If the terms could be discussed without the war the results would be infinitely better, for the discussion then could take place without the harrowing emotional disturbance wrought by war. It is the privilege and the duty of every Christian to seek to establish public confidence in agencies of adjudication which may be expected to establish principles of justice in cases of disagreement. If once it shall be thought to be more honorable to trust to courts of justice rather than to brute force we may see a new era of attempted neighborliness in the world.

Questions for discussion.—How would you define neighborliness? Can you determine beforehand who will prove himself to be neighborly? Can you restrict your list of neighbors to any officially defined group? What would be the difference between a neighborly grocer and one that was unneighborly? How would an unneighborly purchaser differ from a neighborly one? Did it ever occur to you that you might practice Jesus' way of living when you were shopping? What difference would it make in your manners?

Why did Christian people in the United States almost universally deplore the action of Congress in excluding Asiatics from migrating to this country? Was the "gentleman's agreement" between the United States and Japan previous to this legislation based on neighborly relations? In the city of Atlanta there has been established a council on race relations, consisting of representatives of both races, to discuss frankly all difficulties and plan as to the best way in which to meet them. Is this an expression of neighborliness? What is the harm in indulging in race prejudice? Is it fair or truthful to judge an individual of a given race in terms of racial "inferiority"? Where would the greatest differences be found: between races as a whole, or between individuals within any given race? If we were to practice Jesus' way of living, what would become of race prejudice?

How do you choose your companions? Why do groups of young people so easily become "clannish"? To whom do you usually speak after church service? Would a stranger coming to your church feel that you were neighborly? When you go to a party, are you eager that everybody shall have a good time? Do you do anything to bring this about?

Can neighborliness be exercised if enmity or strife exists? Why do Christians generally condemn war? If war is once declared, is there any way of establishing neighborly relations between the nations until the war is ended? Why is it important to create a sentiment against war? If you felt yourself wronged and there was no tribunal of justice to which you could appeal, would you fight for your rights? Why do we denounce private revenge today? Duels used to be regarded as "honorable" affairs. In what ways can we help to establish other ways of adjudication than war?

In the above discussion we have been able only to hint at a few ways in which Jesus' way of living is coming to the attention of all who are in earnest about the higher life. When we are inclined to be discouraged because of theological controversy or because of ecclesiastical inefficiency, let us recall the widespread and rapidly increasing interest in Jesus' way of living. Many young people today, especially among students, are expressing a desire to follow Jesus even if it means radical revision of habits of life and thought. If Christian people really believe in Jesus, a new era of spiritual achievement for the church is ahead.

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